

POWER AND RELIGION IN BAROQUE ROME

BRILL'S STUDIES IN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

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VOLUME 135



POWER AND RELIGION IN BAROQUE ROME

Barberini Cultural Policies

BY

PETER RIETBERGEN



BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON
2006

On the cover: (front) Funerary monument of Urban VIII (1623-1644). Bronze statue of the Pope, flanked by Caritas and Justitia in marble. Bernini 1647; *(back)* The arms of the Barberini on the base of one of the columns of the baldachin in St. Peter's. Bernini. Picture research CKD RU Nijmegen.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISSN 0920-8607
ISBN 90 04 14893 0

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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FOREWORD

The end has been, in a way, the beginning, or rather: what is now the opening piece of this study has been written last. When I first thought I should write about the diary of Giacinto Gigli, one of 17th-century Rome's most famous chroniclers, I realized that a number of essays on Barberini Rome I had produced over the preceding years were rather more closely linked than I had appreciated at the time of writing.¹ Thus, the unsuspected continuity and even coherence of one's intellectual pursuits became obvious once more. It probably amazes no one but the person it concerns, who is least able to survey his own scholarly production with the necessary detachment. Moreover, I felt I now could make some more general observations on the nature of Baroque culture in Barberini Rome and interpret it as, basically, a 'rhetoric of power', embodied in and expressed by the manifold manifestations of papal cultural policy.

This book, then, studies a wide variety of cultural forms: 'high' culture such as architecture, music and poetry, as well as scholarship, but also 'low' culture, such as (ceremonial and ritual) behaviour and, even, 'magic'. Some of these forms are represented in the actions of one single person, Maffeo Barberini (1568–1644) who, as Pope Urban VIII, ruled Rome and the Catholic Church from 1623 to 1644. Concentrating on his pontificate and the parallel 'reign' of the Barberini family, personified in Urban's favourite nephew, Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597–1679), I became aware of the fact that, even without considering the 'allegorical' evidence of the bees, the telling armorial beasts of the Barberini that even nowadays swarm all over Rome, the City Eternal

¹ Five of the ten chapters of this book—including the Prologue and the Epilogue—have been published in an earlier version. I do hope to have brought some critical discernment to their selection and revision, adapting them to the general theme I propose to illustrate. For the original versions of these five chapters, see notes 1 to 6 of the Acknowledgements. Of course, I have felt free to add to these earlier versions, incorporating material collected at a later stage of research to create a broader perspective, in tune with the scope of the book.

in early modern times was, indeed, the stage for a remarkable process of ‘cultural cross-fertilization’, a process that was both the foundation and the result of a policy that used culture in all its forms as an instrument to create and enhance power.

Consequently, through my analysis of the uses the Barberini made of the various forms of culture indicated above, I hope to show that the ‘Baroque’ papacy pursued a definite cultural policy, both in its strictly religious and in its wider, more secular sense, to empower its politics.

Yet, as perhaps always, there remains the feeling that I should have written another book. In this case, it might have been titled ‘Culture and Power in early-17th century Rome’. There are two reasons why I have not written that book. Firstly because, if we want to arrive at a real understanding of the complexity of culture in this town, in this period, we should admit the field is simply too wide to be tilled single-handedly. Therefore, I have not tried to burden my ‘cultural cameos’ with a context that, effectively, would be a rehash of all that has been written on Barberini Rome and the preceding three pontificates, especially since that would have entailed incorporating huge chunks of traditionally-conceived political and art history. Rather, I have chosen to select topics that, I hope, have something new to offer, while, at the same time, they ‘talk’ to one another. Together they may, perhaps, yet evoke a wider vision. Consequently, the book is planned as follows.

The Prologue looks at Rome as a ‘city of power’ through the eyes of Giacinto Gigli, its best-known, but least studied chronicler. His fascinating, albeit one-sided and prejudiced view of Rome and the Barberini introduces both the stage and the main actors and issues I will analyse in the following chapters.

In the first chapter, I sketch and interpret the rise to power of the Barberini family, by looking at one of its earliest outward manifestations, the sumptuous family chapel constructed by Maffeo Barberini in the early years of the 17th century in the Roman church of Sant’Andrea della Valle. The very fact of its construction as well as its pictorial decoration—of which I propose an interpretation—allow us to understand two of the instruments used to create (religious) power in Baroque Rome.

The Latin and Italian poems of Maffeo Barberini—the one real poet-pope in two thousand years of papal history—have never been analysed in their entirety. Yet, to me, they seem to offer some fascinat-

ing clues to the Pope's intentions and policies and, consequently, they are the topic of the second chapter.

The third chapter is devoted to Francesco Barberini, who, as his uncle's favourite nephew, became his main collaborator. Though his political career has been amply studied, we know little of his 'mental' background and his formation. A highly revealing but as yet unstudied 'instruction' given to him during the early stages of his career offers a possibility to analyse 'Baroque behaviour' as a form of power representation.

Chapters IV through VII deal with episodes and persons relatively or even largely unknown. All connected to the pontificate of Urban VIII, these people and their actions illuminate various important aspects of the relationship between power and culture in Barberini Rome.

In chapter VIII, I return to the Pope, to answer the question how he himself behaved as part of a society that, while based on the Christian Faith, yet had great problems in deciding which, precisely, were the legitimate magical manifestations, i.e. the (penultimate?) powers of that Faith.

The Epilogue aims to provide an overall picture of the various instruments of cultural policy employed by the Pope, by the Barberini and by their court and clientele to effectuate the power of religion, the power of the Catholic Church which, of course, was their own power as well.

Although I have conceived the chapters of this book as, basically, independent pieces, I have yet tried to eliminate overlapping and, on the other hand, to introduce cross-references, often to express my own surprised discovery of the connections between the various topics and even between the various protagonists.

This book, then, is not the synthesis to which I allude above. The second reason for not attempting to write such a synthesis is that, at least as far as I can see, far more work needs to be done before we can actually pretend to understand the manifold, but often hidden interrelationships between the various manifestations of papal culture—which I interpret as papal cultural policies—as instruments of papal power. In other words, we need to better analyse the complexity of the interaction between the sometimes stupendous products of the arts and sciences, up till now mostly studied in their splendid isolation, and their social and political context. It seems to me that ideology—in this case religion and its attendant power systems as translated into and represented by images—and indeed the very need for image building and

the manipulation of the senses and, thus, of behaviour as an essential means towards the acquisition and consolidation of that power, go a long way to explain the interdependencies between these various fields: they show us the underlying structure of the ‘theatre’ that was life in Roman society, where many cultural forms, all termed Baroque, were the result of a complex policy that meant to enhance the power of the Church and its rulers. Maybe such an attempt at a synthesis will succeed only if undertaken by a group of specialists, preferably including an anthropologist and a psychologist, instead of by one author.

Peter J.A.N. Rietbergen,
Rome, the Royal Dutch Institute –
Nijmegen, the Radboud University –
Oxford, Christ Church,
June 1990 - June 2005.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any author knows he never writes a book alone: even a one-man enterprise always owes a debt of gratitude to many people. In my case, I am beholden not only to those who somehow and often unwittingly created the occasion for which the various chapters were written, but also to those who, during the various phases of its genesis and its last revision, gave generously of their time in reading and criticizing, thus immeasurably improving the final product.

The latter should be mentioned first: my friends and colleagues Prof. Christianne Berkvens-Stevelinck, formerly of Leiden University and now of the Radboud University at Nijmegen; Prof. Joe Connors, of Columbia University and of Villa 'I Tatti', Florence; Prof. Thomas Noble, of the University of Notre Dame; and, last but not least, Prof. Louise Rice, formerly of Duke and now of New York University—all of whom went through the entire text.

My friends and colleagues Dr Meindert Evers and Dr Bert Treffers, both of the Radboud University, at Nijmegen, and the latter now of the Royal Dutch Institute, at Rome, and Prof. John B. Scott, of Rutgers University, shed light on specific chapters.

All of them confronted me with the inconsistencies of my analyses and interpretations and through their questions forced me to rewrite various parts of this book which, I know, have gained from their criticism.

Thanks go, also, to Prof Jacques Lebrun, of the Sorbonne, at Paris, who opened his country house to me and thus gave me a chance to be inspired by the beautiful landscape of the Provence, with, as the result of a hot summer's work, the final version of chapter VIII of this book.

As indicated already in the Foreword, some of the chapters have a history of their own, which is worth mentioning here, if only because, at least in my opinion, scholars should document their own "Werdegang".

The second chapter, on Urban VIII, poet and pope, though written recently, I owe, in a way, to the man who first introduced me to Rome in the early 1970s, my late teacher when I was an undergraduate

at Nijmegen, Prof. Dr J.J. Poelhekke, former director of the Dutch Institute in Rome. During one of his many erratic, eccentric and highly stimulating seminars, he made a chance, rather disparaging remark about Urban's poetic proclivities. Then, being the generous person he was, he added: 'but I don't know, maybe Urban needed his poetry to be a good pope'. Trying to answer that question provided a possibility to do homage, albeit posthumously.

The idea to work on the Barberini Chapel, in the first chapter, grew out of my interest in the continuity of Roman elite families, and germinated in a find of documents in the Barberini Archives.¹ However, as a simple historian I would not, in 1984, have dared tackle a topic with such obvious art-historical tangentials were it not for the encouragement of my friend and colleague Dr Johanna Heideman, of Leiden University, whose own work on the family chapels of the church of Ara Coeli proved a stimulating example.

Having transgressed into the field of art history and thus having set foot on the path of interdisciplinary history, the next step was easier, the more so as the cache of documents that resulted in the essay on art and power in and around the Augustinian Order allowed me to write, in the fifth chapter, a tribute to one of my former thesis supervisors on the occasion of his retirement.² The interest of the late Prof. Dr J. van Laarhoven in the Conciliar movement and, thus, in the Tridentine decrees on art, combined happily with a case that gave a rare and fascinating view of the various levels of interaction between—religious—art and society, always a topic dear to him.

'Prince Eckembergh's Dinner', now the topic of the fourth chapter, was recreated for the First International Food Congress, held in Istanbul and Konya, Turkey, in 1986. It was the admirable and pleasurable initiative of a culturally-minded Turkish family of great hospitality, the Halicis, who have since continued to gather and support scholars in this particular field—combining history and anthropology—thus setting an example of modern patronage in the best possible sense.³

¹ The first version was published in 1984: P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'De Barberini's bouwen hun kapel', in: *Ex Tempore*, III, 3/4 (1984), 222–240.

² The first version was published in 1992: P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Image and Influence. Art, power politics and the Augustinian Order during the seventeenth century', in: *Annales ESC*, 1992/1, 65–86.

³ The first version was published in 1983: P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Prince Eckembergh Comes to Dinner', in: *A Journal of Culinary History*, VI (1983), 45–54.

In chapter VII, the activities of Lucas Holste, who, in the third decade of the 17th century, came from the North to find his scholarly haven in the Vatican Library, somehow symbolize my own gravitation towards the South, and to the Eternal City.⁴

Ever since I started my career as an inexperienced research student in the early 1970s, the now Royal Dutch Institute in Rome has been the base from which I could work the rich mines of the Roman archives and manuscript collections. Thus, in a way, I owe a fair part of my scholarly pleasure during the past thirty years to the accommodation it provides, but even more to the inspiration that comes from living and working with a like-minded group, the population of the ‘third floor’ of said Institute; over the past decades it has become a major, though as yet unstudied intellectual force in the field of Italian Studies in The Netherlands, to whom I hereby pay a debt of profound gratitude. Yet, the Holste-chapter would not have found its final form but for a valuable, inspiring discussion with Dr. Burckhard Reis, of Hamburg University.

Inspiration for chapter VI, on Abraham Ecchellen, came from my students in the Nijmegen Mediterranean History Program, since alas abolished. In 1988 I proposed to devote a seminar to the history of the relations between the various cultures of the Mediterranean following the years in which Lepanto seemed to have erected invisible but yet strong ideological barriers within the ‘inner sea’. To overcome their scepticism not only as to the viability of such an approach but also as to the very existence of such contacts, I felt I had to show, with an effort of my own, what could be done with the voluminous collections of documents and manuscripts left in Rome and, for that matter, Paris by the numerous 17th- and 18th-century scholars who once kept alive a sense of cultural continuity in the Mediterranean, even though political and religious division suggested otherwise.⁵ But in evaluating this material, and the questions it raised, I certainly was stimulated by the discussions with my colleague Dr Richard van Leeuwen, of Amsterdam University.

Chapter VIII, exploring some of the roles magic played during Urban’s pontificate was dictated by the central argument that links

⁴ The first version was published in 1988: P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, ‘Lucas Holste. A seventeenth-century scholar, librarian and book collector’, in: *Quaerendo*, XVII 3/4 (1988), 205–231.

⁵ The first version was published in 1989: P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, ‘A Maronite mediator between seventeenth-century Mediterranean Cultures: Ibrahim al-Hakilani, or Abraham Ecchellen (1605–1664)’, in: *LIAS*, 16/1 (1989), 13–41.

the various parts of this book. Any study dealing with the culture of the times before the disenchantment brought about by the assumed final victory of 'rationalism' during the Enlightenment, always has to involve the ways in which people sought to control their lives precisely by invoking the powers ascribed to the supernatural. As 'religion and the decline of magic' have so often been linked, a study of magic in one of the world's capitals of religion seemed necessary indeed.

With the Epilogue, that tries to sum up the results of the preceding chapters in an attempt at synthesis, I also express my thanks for the friendship and collegiality of Dr Christianne Berkvens-Stevelinck, my co-worker in the project of the edition of the correspondence of Cardinal Francesco Barberini and Nicholas Claude Fabri de Peiresc.⁶ The present text grew out of our stimulating joint research trips to Rome, Paris and Carpentras in the years 1989 and 1990 as much as out of my own earlier and later Roman investigations.

Obviously, a scholar's life does not depend on friendly and critical colleagues, only. It is lived amidst a great many people who all contribute to the final result of its endeavours by providing, each in his or her own capacities, a congenial environment, asking interested questions at the right time while refraining from bothering one, also at the right time, and, of course, by simply being there. To them, too, I owe a debt of gratitude.

Last, but not least, a scholar should be able to acknowledge the help of his university, the place that, normally, should provide a safe haven for him to do his work in. Lamentably, universities no longer are such safe havens. Therefore, it is with great gratitude that I do acknowledge the help of the two institutions that did enable me to, first, engage in the research and, last, in the final re-writing of this book: the Royal Dutch Institute in Rome, and Christ Church, Oxford.

⁶ A first version was published in 1992: P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'The Return of the Muses', in: P.J. van Kessel, ed., *The Power of Imagery* (Rome 1992), 63–83.

INTRODUCTION

WHEN THE BEES FLEW...

Historiography

Everyone who has visited Rome will have noticed the bees that, in sometimes buzzing profusion, cover the surfaces of churches, fountains, palaces and, indeed, of every object imaginable, whether they be executed in cream-coloured travertine, highly polished marble, gilded bronze or glowing paint. Gregorio Leti, an influential and widely read 17th-century critic of the papacy, told his readers he had counted some twenty thousand bees both in the capital and in the other cities of the Papal States.¹ They are the Barberini bees, the heraldic emblem of a family who produced Maffeo Barberini (1568–1644), who, as Urban VIII (1623–1644), became the longest-reigning pope of the 17th century.

Remarkably, but for a few excellent exceptions, 20th-century historiography has produced no in-depth studies, biographical or otherwise comprehensive, of the early modern popes. Of course, Von Pastor's 1920's, epochal 'History of the Popes' provides monumental, mostly book-length treatments of each individual pontiff.² However, not only is Pastor's work obviously dated as well as, inevitably, biased, also the very existence of his extensive essays seems to have frightened modern historians; only few have ventured to re-evaluate his objects and his approach, and to formulate questions he, as a learned Prussian and a child of his time, simply did not ask.

However, it must be stated clearly that the following chapters do not presume even to begin to fill this gap for the pontificate of the one pope on whom I have chosen to concentrate. Yet, I do hope to contribute—in a small way, but from a much-needed multi-disciplinary point of view—to the study of some neglected but in my view essen-

¹ G. Leti, *Il nepotismo di Roma* (Amsterdam 1667), Vol. I, 208, 228.

² The best general treatment still remains: L. von Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste Pastor*, o.c., Vol. XIII, 1+2, *Zeitalter der Katholischen Reformation und des Dreissigjährigen Krieges. Gregor XV und Urban VIII* (Freiburg 1928–1929). To be cited as: *Pastor*.

tial and interrelated aspects of papal policy during the Baroque period. Departing from my 1983 Ph.D.-thesis on the socio-cultural history of the Church's institutions in the 17th century,³ I have set out, in this study, to integrate these earlier interests into the broader context of cultural history. Thus, I hope to add to recent studies whose authors have provided valuable new insights into various aspects of the period, especially Peter Burke, Patricia Waddy, John Beldon Scott, Laurie Nussdorfer, Marcus Völkel, Sebastian Schütze, Frederic Hammond and Bert Treffers, even though my focus is rather different and I find I cannot always agree with them.⁴

Sources

As will be evident from the notes, that contain full bibliographic references, this study does, of course, take into account the large body of (modern) scholarly literature both on Barberini Rome, the papacy and the wider issues of politics and culture I propose to address. However, basically this book is built on the sources produced by the people I have put centre-stage. Indeed, many of my questions originated in my fascination with these sources rather than in the literature. Now, an exhaustive list of all individual documents cited would be meaningless: it would simply consist of the many hundreds of volumes of archival and other manuscript material I haven consulted, often containing as many as several hundreds of individual documents, each. It seems, however, useful to outline the structure of the material.

In view of the complex interaction, over more than a millennium, of those two rather disparate institutions—the Roman Catholic Church

³ P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, *Pausen, Prelaten, Bureaucraten. Aspecten van de Geschiedenis van het Pauschap en de Pauselijke staat in de 17e eeuw* (Nijmegen 1983).

⁴ P. Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge 1987); P. Waddy, *Seventeenth-century Roman palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan* (New York 1990); J.B. Scott, *Images of Nepotism. The Painted Ceilings of Palazzo Barberini* (Princeton 1991); L. Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton 1992); M. Völkel, *Römische Kardinalshaushalte des 17. Jahrhunderts. Borghese, Barberini, Chigi* (Tübingen 1993); S. Schütze, 'Urbano inalza Pietro, e Pietro inalza Urbano. Beobachtungen zu Idee und Gestalt der Ausstattung von Neu-Sankt Peter unter Urban VIII', in: *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, 29 (1994), 213–287; Fr. Hammond, *Music and Spectacle in baroque Rome. Barberini Patronage under Urban VIII* (New Haven 1994); B. Treffers, *Een Hemel op Aarde. Extase in de Romeinse Barok* (Amsterdam 1995).

and the Papal States—the documentary situation in Rome is equally complex. Simplifying matters slightly, it can be sketched as follows.

On the one hand, the archives pertaining to the government of the ‘universal’ Church are preserved in the so-called “Archivio Segreto Vaticano” (ASV), one of the largest archives in the world; it is still kept in the Vatican Palace itself. Contrary to what the name seems to suggest, its holdings are no more secret than the archives of any global organization or, indeed, of any (Western) state. Ordered, basically, along the lines dictated by the Church’s institutional structure and needs, those who want to find the documents pertaining to a particular pontificate, as, in my case, the reign of Urban VIII, have to go through the inventories that, sometimes in detail, sometimes only sketchily, list the countless thousands of documents produced by each and any of the dozens of departments and sub-departments that made up the papacy’s central bureaucracy.

Also, given the fact that, from the late 15th to the early 18th centuries, most popes decided to involve one or more of their closest relatives in the management of Church affairs, wanting to know more about Cardinal Francesco Barberini as Cardinal-Secretary of State—basically the Church’s prime minister-cum minister of foreign affairs—I could expect to have to consult the huge archives of, for example, the State Secretariat. For his diplomatic missions to Spain, I had to see the archives of the papal embassy, or “nunziatura”, in Madrid, et cetera. In assembling data from these departmental archives, I was able to flesh out chapter III, on Francesco’s life.

On the other hand, the popes not only served as supreme pontiff, ruling the Church, they also governed the so-called “Patrimonium Petri”, their ‘temporal state’ or, in short, the Papal States—the plural resulting from the fact that over time several formerly independent principalities had been included in it—, which, from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, equalled the better part of Central Italy. This medium-sized kingdom which, or so the popes argued, safeguarded their political independence in the midst of and vis-à-vis the increasingly competitive and combative states of Europe, also furnished a considerable part of their income. If only to guarantee an uninterrupted tax-flow, their state had to be as well-governed as their Church. Consequently, the Vatican was not only the seat of the Church’s central management, it also was the place where the “Stato Pontificio” was administrated. Besides the ‘Congregations’, or ministries specifically responsible for Church affairs, there were a number that took care

of, e.g., papal finance—amongst others the “Camera Apostolica”—and other aspects of temporal government, such as the Congregation of the “Buon Governo”, as well as a number of courts of high justice.

Since the post-medieval popes involved their family in the government of the Papal States as well, in searching for material documenting the official functions of the various members of the Barberini family, I also had to go through the archives of these ministries. Thus, in the archives of the “Camera Apostolica”, I found some of the papers that enabled me, in chapter IV, to reconstruct the ceremonies of the reception of the imperial ambassador in 1637.

Alas, by and large the records of the Papal States are not kept in the Vatican any more. Since the 1870’s, after the new state of Italy had been founded, the archives of the now former Papal States, containing tens of thousands of volumes, in their entirety have been transferred to the Italian state archives (Archivio di Stato di Roma, ASR), documenting, as they obviously did, part of the territory of the new state and its history. They can now be consulted—though not, one must admit, with the facility one would expect—either in the historic premises of the so-called “Palazzo della Sapienza”, the former papal university, or in the new buildings at Rome’s EUR-quarter.

Since the Italian government, in the 1870s, seized most of the material possessions of the Church—such as, e.g., the Italian monasteries—, all documents pertaining to these religious foundations were confiscated, too. Consequently, though one would, really, assume the archives of abbeys, churches and convents to be part of the Church’s central archives in the ASV, they actually have to be looked for in the ASR. It is there that I found, by chance, the hundreds of documents I used to reconstruct the ‘iconomachia’ of the Bare Feet in the Augustinian Order, in chapter V. Yet, to discover whether the Barberini played any role in this fascinating case of propaganda politics, I had to return to the ASV, since, after all, any involvement of Pope Urban and his nephew in this case would have been part of government policy on the level of the Church as well.

However, as I discovered when I first started studying the history of the papacy, in Rome nothing is ever really simple. Indeed, historians addressing Roman history from the later Middle Ages onwards, are confronted with a decidedly complicating factor.

Since the late 15th century, it was very common indeed for (upper echelon) papal bureaucrats to either keep copies of all their official papers, or, sometimes, to even simply preserve the better part of their

original administration at home, in their family palace that, often, served as their office as well. Not uncommonly, such papers then ended up in the family archive, to be inherited by future generations, or to be thrown away by them. Given the importance of, especially, the archives of ‘papal families’—those who produced both a pope and, in consequence of the practice of ‘nepotism’, one or more high-ranking papal administrators—any researcher delving into early-modern Roman history has to find out the whereabouts of the family papers pertaining to the pontificate(s) he studies.

Luckily, one way or another many of these family archives and manuscript collections have ended up in the Vatican after all. However, due to problems of, both, historical methodology and staffing, they have not been integrated in the “Archivio Segreto”, though that might save researchers quite a bit of work indeed. Instead, they have been added as separate collections to the ‘manuscript department’ of the “Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana” (BAV), in short the Vatican Library that, like its archival counterpart, is still situated in the Vatican Palace and is as open to the public as the archives are.

In the case of the Barberini family, their manuscript collections—the more than twenty thousand volumes of the so-called “Manoscritti Barberiniani Latini”—now form part of the BAV (BAV, BL). They include most of Pope Urban’s private and official papers before he ascended the papal throne, amongst them the manuscripts of his poems, that inspired me to write chapter II. They also contain all of the remaining private and official papers of his relatives, including the hundreds of volumes recording the life and times of Cardinal Francesco Barberini. There, I found the letters and papers that allowed me to reconstruct Francesco’s early days, his upbringing and his first years as his uncle’s closest adviser, including the majority of documents that went into the writing of chapter III, as well as, quite luckily, some of the papers that proved his and Urban’s involvement in the ‘Case of the Bare Feet’, analysed in chapter V. The Barberini Manuscripts also contain the Cardinal’s extensive correspondences with such of his own collaborators as, e.g., his librarian Lucas Holstenius, highlighted in chapter VI. They amply illustrate Francesco’s involvement in the life and works of the Orientalist scholar Abraham Ecchellen, described in chapter VII, as well. Moreover, precisely because Holstenius bequeathed to Barberini his own extensive manuscript collection, the learned German’s other letter books—again, dozens of volumes—as well as the papers recording his own many official functions in the Church have been

preserved amongst the “Barberiniani Latini”, too. However, because of Ecchellen’s and Holste’s relations with France, and with French scholars, I had to consult some of the manuscript collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris as well.

Over the centuries, the papal families, enriched often beyond expectation by their papal uncles and their cardinal-nephews, obtained vast estates and other riches. The papers relating to their administration obviously made up the bulk of their family archives proper. In the case of the Barberini Archives—a huge mass of hundreds of weighty account books (some measuring as much as 100x45x30 cm), of grand ledgers, of bundles of business letters, et cetera—the researcher is, again, lucky in that they, too, now are part of the Vatican Library (BAV, Archivio Barberiniano, or AB). Though this is, in a sense, a highly unusual arrangement—normally a library, though it often contains a manuscript collection, does not double as an archive—the Vatican was able to acquire the Barberini Archives in the early 20th century and wisely availed itself of the opportunity, not bothering about traditional rules of division and management. In the “Archivio Barberiniano”, I discovered most of the documents that helped me reconstruct the construction and decoration of the Barberini family chapel in Sant’Andrea della Valle, as presented in chapter I. Yet, without the additional documentation found in the Barberini Manuscripts, the story would have been much the poorer.

Besides being based on all this archival and manuscript material, this study also relies on and refers to many 16th- and 17th-century printed books, as, for example, the printed versions of Pope Urban’s poems used in chapter II, the dozens of books published under the auspices of his nephew Cardinal Francesco cited in the Epilogue, the books written by the scholars attached to the various members of the Barberini family as used in chapters VI and VII, et cetera. Since, effectively, the papal library, i.e. the Vatican Library, was a copyright library, over the centuries it has come to hold hundreds of thousands of volumes, including many of the ones I have used. Moreover, though the Barberini family created a remarkable private library in its palace at Quattro Fontane—now Rome’s museum of early modern art—, in the end that collection, too, including the beautiful Baroque scaffolding, was incorporated in the Vatican Library.

However, contrary to what one would think, in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries many books were not printed at all, but existed only in one or more manuscript copies. To study these, or, indeed, to scru-

tinize the original, manuscript version of many a printed book, one has to (re-)turn to the Vatican manuscript collections—in this case not only the “Manoscritti Barberiniani Latini”, but also the “Manoscritti Chigiani” (BAV, Manoscritti Chigiani), the “Ottoboniani Latini” (BAV, Ottoboniani Latini) and the “Manoscritti Vaticani Latini” (BAV, Vat. Lat.), to cite but three of the many other major collections, each comprising thousands of manuscript volumes.

Problems: power, religion and cultural policy in Baroque Rome

The pontificate of Pope Urban VIII, the man who was baptized Maffeo Barberini in 1568, lasted for 21 years, from his election to the papacy in 1623 to his death in 1644. Thus, he became the embodiment of the Church of Rome and of the Papal States, that fascinating combination providing the researcher with an equally fascinating problem: how to analyse and comprehend an organization and a state ruled by a prince who combined the powers temporal and spiritual within an elective monarchical system, resulting in a situation that was unique in Europe.⁵ I have started from the assumption that, upon this stage, the ‘grand theatre of the world’ as Rome liked to define itself, the manifestations of culture could not but be complex and often contradictory.

When a new pope assumed the ‘power of the keys’—the symbol of St. Peter’s—he became the keystone of a structure that was seemingly immutable with the age-old traditions of the Roman Catholic Church that posed itself universal in place and time. At the same time, it was surprisingly flexible, functioning within a constantly changing economic, political and, from the early 16th century onwards religious setting and therefore forced to always absorb, albeit slowly, new ideas. Indeed, in itself the very process that enabled a person to reach the papacy implied participation in a system that required pairing a dogged adherence to accepted values to a certain originality of mind that yet would not offend the electors, the members of the College of Cardinals convened in a conclave, and the various factions that backed and

⁵ I have dealt extensively with the structure of papal monarchy and the Papal States in: Rietbergen, *Pausen*, o.c., ‘Introduction’, and Chapter II. One should also consult: P. Prodi, *Il Sovrano Pontefice, un corpo e due anime: la monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* (Bologna 1982).

often outright instructed them: the princes of (Catholic) Europe and the lobbies and pressure groups within the Church itself.

Once elected, a pope, of course, inherited all those traditions, theological, religious and liturgical as well as political and social: a pope inherited a complex culture, which had formed him as much as he was, often, able to form it himself. Prudent continuity in manipulating this culture was as essential to uphold his power as was judicious innovation of a wide range of traditions. Moreover, each pope sought to make and, preferably, leave his mark in Rome, not only in establishing his family in the forefront of society, but also in creating lasting monuments that, though they might strike both his contemporaries and posterity as testimonies to his own glory, were meant to proclaim the glory of Holy Church as well. And indeed, to the numerous visitors to this town that liked to think of itself as the *Urbs*, 'The City' par excellence, from humble pilgrims to haughty ambassadors, these monuments, whatever their nature and manifestation, soon lost their personal connotations, blending into one vision of a city truly 'eternal'. For it was a city that constantly remade itself, like a phoenix rising from its ashes. Using not only the old materials but also the old idea of the city itself, and the innumerable ideas it had generated over time, it wove a web of ideological links that made it the reflection on earth of the heavenly Jerusalem, the City of God.⁶

To this city, the Barberini came, a Florentine family who reached the apogee of power through their wise investment in and the good luck of one of their members, Maffeo Barberini, who, in 1623, became Pope Urban VIII. Many people, scholars not excluded, will almost automatically associate the Barberini name with the most blatant manifestations of papal nepotism. Surely, however, far too much naively negative significance has been attached to this phenomenon, almost as if the pontificate of Urban VIII were a surviving act staged solely for the benefit of the Barberini family's power and prosperity.⁷ Rather than 'condemn' it, we should see it as a major instrument of power, to be understood against the background of the urgent political and psychological demands posed upon the 'ruling family' by the elective monarchy that was the papacy.⁸ In short, we should see it as a cultural phenomenon

⁶ Cfr. P.J. Rietbergen, *De retoriek van de Eeuwige Stad: Rome gelezen* (Nijmegen 2003).

⁷ As, for instance, in John B. Scott's otherwise brilliant study: *Images of Nepotism. The painted ceilings of Palazzo Barberini* (Princeton 1991).

⁸ See my discussion of the problem: Rietbergen, Pausen, *o.c.*, chapter II.

that, in a variety of forms, continues to exist in many present-day socio-political structures, whether they be monarchical or presidential, and, moreover, irrespective of whether they exist within a democratic or a totalitarian society.

The very fact that even a contemporary observer, the Roman diarist Giacinto Gigli, was able to look back on Urban's pontificate as divided in two periods, the first half dominated by a still strong-willed pope, whose mind and body were fully attuned to the many exigencies of his role, and the latter part, when his age began to tell, by his nephews, shows the effects, according to some even the inevitability of the underlying structure.⁹ As so many of his predecessors, Urban, while still in his prime, deeply felt the need for trustworthy collaborators who, in a culture that was family-centred, could not but be his closest relatives, because early modern European society still was dominated by the concept of "pietas", family piety. The sheer extent of his duties was daunting and the vision of a God-given task, unequalled on earth, must have created tensions and, in the end, great loneliness. Subsequently, as an ailing potentate he could not simply remove his relatives from the positions of power he had given them without undermining his own position.

Of course, the financial consequences of Urban's nepotism have been huge, in terms of the money spent on his relatives, money some saw as the legitimate property of the Church and the Papal States rather than as the pope's private purse though, of course, all European princes considered their state income as their own treasury as well. Again, however, we have to understand that the material support of one's family was generally accepted and even applauded as part of the concept of "munificentia". In a prince, it was a duty that had to be fulfilled on a truly princely scale, resulting, also, in his "magnificentia" that, in itself, was an instrument of (the representation of) power.

Nevertheless, in the case of the Barberini, many considered papal expenditure on behalf of his relatives to have been excessive indeed. Even Urban himself became aware of this when, during his last years, his almost constant illnesses forced him to consider his imminent death, and he started to doubt the choices he had made in this respect. However, one may well ask what was the effect of the reassuring words spoken to him by the committee of cardinals and lawyers he then

⁹ See the Prologue to the present study.

appointed to look into the theological and moral issues involved. Though they did find a legal justification that would exonerate him, it may not have really convinced him.¹⁰

Still, the initial jealousy always generated by a family's sudden rise to great wealth and power—as was the essence of the papal elective monarchy—accounts for the heavy criticism Urban came in for as much as, with the passing of the years, the unusual length of his papacy. For the latter resulted in the increasing impatience of persons and factions waiting to take over the reins of power and proceed to the division of the spoils. Also, the pontificate's end in military and financial failure brought about more by the Barberini family's arrogance than by reasons of state contributed to a negative verdict on what, during Urban's lifetime, had been hailed—admittedly by papal adulators—as the 'golden age of the Barberini'.¹¹

Meanwhile, it is necessary to consider critically the variety of uses to which the wealth of papal families was normally put: the acquisition of extensive landed property and numerous shares to create a family capital did, of course, little to represent the power of the papacy on the "theatrum mundi". However, the construction of sumptuous family palaces and villas did show the munificence and magnificence of papal power on a more public scale; for though the people who actually enjoyed these dwellings were a small group, only, still these were, in many ways, public buildings, whose effect on the populace at large should not be underestimated. The publication of minor and major works of learning and literature, the commissioning of great works of visual art and the patronage of music definitely benefited a large readership, public and audience. And, of course, the funding of charity as practised in Rome—on a far grander scale than by contemporary secular monarchies, for in line with the demands of Christianity as it was then understood—actually helped keeping thousands of people alive. If one were to argue, following the politically correct tone of many a modern scholarly study, that all this first and foremost served the aim of family aggrandizement and glorification and, thus, the propagation and prolongation of personal or family power, one should realize that

¹⁰ J. Grisar, 'Päpstliche Finanzen, Nepotismus und Kirchenrecht unter Urban VIII', in: *Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae VII* (1943), 237–252.

¹¹ Among many other contemporary references: C. Sarbiewski, *Aureum Saeculum Urbani VIII P.O.M. orbi invecum Anno MDCXXIII*, a manuscript poem in: *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Manoscritti Barberiniani Latini (BL)*, Vol. 2105, fols. 1–9.

it also served the power of the early modern Church as it envisaged its role, in Europe and the wider world. Thus, the papal presence in early modern Rome presents itself as a system of power/culture, a system of great complexity and sophistication that should not be judged on one account only, nor with the facile use of norms alien to its time.

There is yet another plane on which to look at the problems posed by an interpretation of culture in Rome at the end of the 16th and during the early decades of the 17th century.

To most people, the period of the Barberini will be almost synonymous with the so-called Baroque Era. Other names, such as Bernini and Borromini, will come to mind, invoking an image of grandiose works of architecture, painting and sculpture that, in their consciously contrived interdependence, tried to achieve “the unity of the visual arts”.¹² Yet, precisely this point needs to be elaborated. I feel that (the) Baroque, far more than being a ‘style of art’, only, was a style of living and, moreover, a style of living wherein all elements of life were fundamentally united. For besides the bees and the Barberini, it was, also, banquets and behaviour and books, and so much else. Hence, I would argue that Baroque should be the name given to the complex set of phenomena, i.e. to the culture that was the expression of life in European society in the decades following the Council of Trent,¹³ when Reform Catholicism in its centralizing, Roman version reigned supreme.¹⁴ Indeed, the unity expressed in the epithet ‘Baroque’ initially derived from that very fact: it owes its existence to the fundamental, indeed existential role played by (Roman Catholic) Christianity as the synthesizing element in the days and works of most European people.

In defining Baroque as a culture one may, I think, compare it to Romanticism, as the two seem to share various characteristics, up to the point that they were both based on religion, on a sense of the fundamental relationship between the natural and the supernatural world; indeed, both tried to preserve that religion against the onslaught

¹² I. Lavin, *Bernini and the Unity of the Visual Arts* (New York 1980).

¹³ I go beyond the analysis proposed by the author who wrote one of the most perspicacious studies to date on the phenomenon: J. Maravall, *Culture of the Baroque. Analysis of a Historical Structure* (Minneapolis 1986), esp. 58, unless one wants to read my ‘culture’ for his ‘structure’.

¹⁴ One should refer here to the long-neglected essay by: Ch. Dejob, *De l’influence du Concile de Trente sur la littérature et les beaux arts chez les peuples catholiques: essai d’introduction à l’histoire littéraire du siècle de Louis XIV* (Paris 1884).

of what, to many people, were new ideas, new values that seemed to undo Christianity's essential validity. But whereas Romanticism tended to stress Man's private self, and allowed, even encouraged him to project it onto society at large, Baroque was a culture that sought to express his public face, stressing and facilitating his integration in a strongly normative society, indeed, forcing his emotions to conform to and, thus, confirm the norms of that society.

The above reflections that are the basis for the hypotheses and interpretations that underlie my analysis of the various cases presented in this book yet need to be refined.

Some people might argue one should never try to explain a period in monocausal terms, only. Yet, in retrospect, a certain time always will be known by a small number of dominant cultural characteristics. To me, Baroque culture, defined as the culture of Rome—and of those parts of Europe influenced by Rome—between the last decades of the 16th and the last decades of the 17th century, can be characterized as follows.

Any complex society with its inevitably attendant complex economy will become manifest in forms of culture that somehow tend to be related to the central question of control, of power.¹⁵ Especially if the power structures are not legitimised by and founded on institutions based on some sort of consensus involving Man's free will, or the fiction of it, the dominant institutions will have to marshal all available means to manipulate man's head and his heart, the workings of his conscious mind and of his subconscious desires. In a society like papal Rome, the dominant institution was, of course, the Church, in its most visible manifestations, the papal court, the Curia, the aristocracy of 'The City' and the Papal States, the religious Orders. The persons or groups who had a stake in these institutions needed to make sure they retained their power, while those who felt they were put or kept outside the corridors of that power sought possibilities to regain or acquire it. Both ends involved the deployment of cultural policies, of propaganda that could reach ears and eyes, that could shrewdly influence both the intellect and the senses; strategies of rhetoric were the means to these ends, both tapping from the sources of public ideology and of internalised private emotions that had become beliefs, and at the same time reinforcing them. For power needed to be stated, to be made present, to be enacted

¹⁵ M. Mann, *States and Liberties* (London 1994).

in public. Not surprisingly, in many contemporary texts, Rome was likened to a stage, and the persons and groups enumerated above were considered actors, playing the role dictated by their functions on the stage, in the theatre of power that was the world, human society.

Consequently, the increasing stylisation of every form of (public) behaviour, which dressed even the most mundane aspects of daily routine in forms of ceremony and ritual, obviously was a reflection of this vision of Man's presence on the stage of the world's theatre. But, on a deeper level, it was the outward, stage-like manifestation of a growing need for control—control of people's actions but, of course, also of the thoughts whence these actions sprang. After the relative freedom of the preceding age, 'Baroque' society, which, of course, means the groups that dominated that society, represents itself in a culture that reflects a mentality of control.

The cultural change expressed in and brought about by the Catholic Reform movement as codified in the tenets of Trent was, if not the only, surely one of the most profound forces in a society wherein religion still was, or pretended to be the foundation and touchstone of Man's life. In the latter half of the 16th and the first decades of the 17th century, the bases of the Church's power—an economy properly functioning, a society religiously and therefore culturally homogenous—were being gradually eroded. The groups exercising power felt a stronger need for control, but yet could not conceive of any other means than the ones provided by religion as the central ideological framework of both individual and society. Perhaps the manifold manifestations of Baroque culture, most of which ultimately derived from religion as a system of values and a power structure, can be interpreted as the results of a struggle for those values and that power. It was a struggle affecting both the elite and the masses, to use this obviously ideal-typical dichotomy. Hence, the cultural manifestations that were the outcome of as well as the very weapons used in this struggle affected not only the domain of the so-called 'great tradition', the world of the literate, wherein transmission of culture, of ideas often used the cosmopolitan language of learning, of a learning, however, that was always coined by religion; it also triggered reactions within the 'small tradition', the world of the illiterate, spatially and mentally enclosed in largely local communities wherein, however, official religion i.e. Christianity, and its many varieties were the language of power as well.

Obviously, the power elites, too, could not but act within the norms they themselves helped set. For they were the protagonists on the stage,

having to exemplify, at least in their public life, the morals and virtues held up as norms and guidelines to society at large. Equally obviously, this could not but result in tensions, if only because elites, out of a need to test the extent of their power, always tend to explore the limits of the very norms they themselves impose.

Given the changes in 20th-century Western culture, it is increasingly difficult to uncover and visualize the vitalizing interaction between the various elements of 'Baroque' life, within the power systems that characterized papal Rome, if only because many present-day observers cannot even begin to understand that Christian religion really was the unifying factor determining and structuring daily routine in all its aspects, Man's actions through all his thoughts. Moreover, there is a definitely dangerous tendency in contemporary historiography, viz. to know the past better than it knew itself, more specifically by using the methods of cultural sociology and social anthropology.¹⁶ Indubitably, the social sciences have developed concepts that are helpful in focusing the attention of historians *largo sensu* on topics and patterns of past life that have been neglected or even unsuspected. Yet, they sometimes misleadingly construct the past as a country by and large inhabited by people whom they 'accuse' of, e.g., seeing a religious procession as the festive celebration of the presence of Christ or the saints instead of seeing it as the complex iconography of power it 'really' was.¹⁷

Rather, I feel there is no satisfactory answer to the question some, or perhaps even many readers will ask. Was power a means to religion, or religion a means to power? Or, to phrase the problem otherwise: was power a means to an end, or was it an end in itself? Regarding the protagonists in this book—Pope Urban VIII, Cardinal Francesco Barberini—if not, perhaps, the host of people surrounding them, employed by them—I feel that, using all the powers within their reach, they sought a fusion of mind and heart to effectuate the ultimate goal, man's union with God.

Those who decide to study 'Baroque society' soon discover that up till now some of its main problems have been best addressed by scholars of

¹⁶ For a criticism of contemporary practice: T. Assad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore 1993).

¹⁷ As, for example, in: M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge 1993).

the visual arts. Increasingly, however, research into 17th-century Roman society has involved the increasingly cooperative efforts of many disciplines. Among them, art historians, musicologists and students of theatre history have been especially productive. And yet it seems most scholars have tended to stop before what, to me at least, is the central question. With often amazing acuity and perspicacity they have tried to analyse the various forms of culture that were produced by this society, and effectively constituted it, but while we now know far more about the rhetorical strategies employed in Baroque cultural production, i.e. about the forms of the message, we still know little about its content, about the groups it tried to reach and, finally, about its effects. These are issues that need to be addressed. However tentatively, the following, more specific considerations hope to do so.

Even the expressions of the visual arts, seemingly so free and exuberant, were nothing if not the expression of and the medium to effectuate highly controlled emotions which, consequently, would result in desired action. Not surprisingly, the written programs for or comments on these manifestations often use the term 'force'. The spectator, through immersion in a visual discourse often reinforced by, and embedded in well-tuned verbal and musical settings, was pleasantly but nonetheless forcefully guided towards the one intended message. Though this message and, indeed, its forms might differ from patron to patron and, hence, from chapel to chapel, from church to church, indeed, from one public space to another, its intention—the power it sought to effectuate—was to never leave the spectator free to 'decide' for himself. What applied to the visual arts, held good for the other ones, too: for the theatre proper, for music, for poetry. It also held good for properly, i.e. controlledly and controllably using food, for the arts of the kitchen. It even held good for the art of proper behaviour, both the behaviour of daily routine and the behaviour of wooing and dying.

Moreover, in giving material form to this message, the producers of culture were far from free themselves. If not consciously guided by formalised treatises or programs specifically written for the occasion, subconsciously they always worked within the cultural confines of a society as set by a 'worldview' that, through its specific cultural signature, steered their emotions and actions.

Especially the patronage involved in the more spectacular manifestations of Baroque culture was, in its very act, an act of power. It showed both the "munificentia" and the "magnificentia" of the patron that were considered part of the proper behaviour of a powerful per-

son. It consolidated his hold over the artists who were instrumental in visualizing it. But most important, the content of the products this magnificent munificence generated—a palace, a picture or a poem, or, for that matter, a piece of marzipan table decoration—created, through its form, an emotional rapport with the spectator. It sent a message that often was interpreted within a very precise context of power and thus became a stimulus towards desired, specific, proper behaviour, whether experienced and acted consciously or subconsciously.

As I indicated above, historians often tend to assume their analyses reveal structures of thought and action in past societies of which contemporaries had no knowledge or awareness—or so they think. Obviously, they are almost always mistaken. Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597), cardinal-archbishop of Bologna,¹⁸ not the first but perhaps the most influential theorist of Tridentine religious art and, hence, one of the most influential strategists of propaganda for the Church's power, knew exactly how man's mind worked, how society functioned, and what one should do to make the medium carry the message. To him, beyond the written text, it was the spoken word but even more the visual image that were the most influential information carriers. Consequently, he had thought deeply about their use in society.

To contextualize his treatise on the uses of religious art, Paleotti structured (late 16th-century European) society according to four not entirely distinct categories. The first were the “spirituali”, the clergy at large, who dominated if not controlled most instruments of power, not only in the Papal States. The clergy were not necessarily identical with the second group, the “letterati”, the ones who could be reached through a culture of learning, the culture of the written and, lately, the printed text; obviously, besides the increasingly important world of scholars, this group also included the literate members of the non-clerical elites, both the old nobility and the Church-related bureaucrats, the new arrivals on the stage of power, as well as the not very numerous professionals. The third section of society thus divided were the “idioti”, those who could neither read nor write; except in a few countries,

¹⁸ G.B. Paleotti, *Discorsi intorno alle immagini sacre et profane ... raccolte e poste insieme ad utile delle anime per commissione di monsignore illustrissimo ... cardinale Paleotti* (Bologna 1582). A Latin version was produced in 1599: Idem, *De imaginibus sacris et profanis illustri libri quinque, quibus multiplices earum abusus, iuxta sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini decreta deleguntur* (Ingoldstadt 1599). The 1582-version is, with other treatises on art, reproduced in: P. Barocchi, ed., *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento fra Manierismo e Controriforma* (Bari 1961), Vols. I–II. On Paleotti's life: P. Prodi, *Il Cardinale Gabriele Paleotti* (Rome 1959), Vols I–II.

they were the majority of Europe's population, for some 75 per cent of males and some 85 per cent of females never mastered these skills. Last, but not least, there were the "pittori", those who could be employed to give a pictorial or indeed in any sense representational form to the message, an adequate form that is, tuned to the group or groups one intended to reach. Though Paleotti did not himself widen the scope of his treatise to cover other mediums of propaganda, of the (re-)presentation of power than painting, I think for "pittori" one must also read: architects, musicians, poets, preachers, indeed every artisan whose craft could be used to create forms able to convey messages: moreover, the "letterati" themselves inevitably came to belong to the group of 'image builders'.

In Paleotti's highly perceptive and shrewd analysis, one thing stands out. Whoever the producer or the consumer, the strategy was always the same. Using such terms as "muovere" and "delectare", "docere" and "insegnare", he argues one should make certain to reach people's hearts. By 'moving' or 'enticing' them with all available 'affective' means, one will 'effectuate' instruction into desired behaviour, into controllable action. The means may differ according to the group addressed. The common folk should not be approached with the intricate arguments of the learned; allegory and mythology are not their language; affectively effective forms, aided by speaking colours—again I feel we may read: sounds, and gestures—will convince them. Sometimes, of course, the simple display of massive wealth through glitter and gold will do the trick. But in the end, whatever the means, the control of emotions will result in a situation wherein emotions facilitate control. According to Paleotti, the public can be 'forced' to accept the power of the Church, the power of religion. Indeed, they must be forced to do so.

In early 17th-century Rome, where, for example, Pope Urban's own public orator and professor of rhetoric Agostino Mascardi wrote a treatise on the many ways people's feelings could be moved,¹⁹ the powers-that-be tried to direct these 'forces'. Using every available form of culture—as produced, on their instigation, by the "pittori" *largo sensu*—they sought to strengthen their power within the wider society: amongst the "spirituali", the "letterati" and, of course, the "idioti". This resulted in a process that fostered cross-fertilization between the various forms

¹⁹ A. Mascardi, *Romanae Dissertationes de affectibus...animi earumque characteribus* (Rome 1639), dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Barberini.

of culture to create one powerful, all-encompassing emotion—a truly Baroque culture. While stimulating cultural continuity, the process also facilitated cultural change. This book, analysing this process through a series of interrelated cases, will, I hope, help us better understand the relationship between religion and power through the means of the cultural policies pursued by the Barberini.

PROLOGUE

GIACINTO GIGLI, CHRONICLER, OR: POWER IN THE STREETS OF ROME

Introduction

High culture, low culture—elite and populace. Such constructed opposites have haunted the pages of cultural history for the past decades, and although the more sophisticated practitioners of the genre already seem to have abandoned them for a more integralist stance, the dichotomy still dominates the imagination. The study of Roman culture seems especially characterized by this divisive image: the refined civilization of the papal court, manifest in the grandiose monuments of the arts, of literature and of music—the culture of a group who cannot have numbered more than a few thousand people, mostly men—at times seems a completely different world from the life of the other 90,000 or so Romans who made up the capital of the Papal States and of Catholic Christendom in a normal year.

But do we actually now how an ‘ordinary’ Roman, who did not really belong to this upper class, looked upon ‘The Town’, his town? The title of this Prologue shows I work from the assumption that whoever chronicled life in papal Rome would be primarily preoccupied with power. Indeed, after a first glance at the available material, I felt that such persons were indeed so inclined: most of the sources that fall in the category of texts chronicling the Town’s daily life seem to record the many visible manifestations of power: power temporal, power spiritual and, of course, power supernatural. They concern the rituals of a capital that was excessively attuned to the outward manifestations of the complex power system that, within the theatre that was Rome, centred around the pope, his family and all the other persons and institutions that, together, embodied the Church which was the vessel of those powers. Obviously, however, such an assumption needs to be verified.

Of course, the opinions contemporaries formed and voiced about Rome could either be (self-)censored, with a view of spreading them among a wider public, or rather more candid, if they were recorded

in private notes, only. Ideally, one should compare the two visions of Rome, starting, perhaps, with a study of the former. These, however, are represented in a source that cannot be analysed by a single researcher. I am referring, of course, to the information contained in the periodical mailings of the so-called *avvisatori*. It was these 'reporters', journalists *avant la lettre* who, to a large extent, determined the image that was created in the mind of a general, mostly non-Roman readership; they addressed a specific, though actually undeterminable audience, made up of foreign princes and of the officials who read their reports and, perhaps, summarised them—as the reports that came to Rome from all over the world were summarised by the Curia's clerks for the benefit of such persons as the Cardinal-*Padrone*. Yet, the readership of the *avvisi* that were dispatched from Rome—mostly once a week, and offering a selection of shorter or longer analyses or simply enumerations of what had happened in Rome in the previous days—must have been rather wider than this small group; inevitably, in this day and age anything resembling a letter bringing news of foreign parts—especially of such foreign parts as the papal capital, the capital of the Church—was eagerly awaited by a wide circle of 'subsidiary' readers or rather listeners who hoped to be told the latest by the formal recipients of the *avvisi*.

The *avvisi* are among the sources historians use most for their reconstruction of life in Renaissance and Baroque Rome. They also are among the least studied. For though everyone ransacks these reports for the telling detail, for the one missing piece of information on a person or an occurrence no one ever seems to have asked what was the essence of the image of the Eternal City this stream of reports must have projected on those who relied upon them for their information, those who, avidly or reluctantly, read them as they arrived, week after week, in Florence or Venice, in Paris or Madrid. It seems strange that, as yet, no monograph ever has tried to analyse the verbal picture which the *avvisatori* painted of the Rome they were supposed to 'cover', being, in fact, what foreign correspondents are to the readers of today's newspapers. Yet, however desirable such a survey would be, even for the purpose of this modest Prologue an analysis of the *avvisi* covering Urban's entire pontificate would be well nigh impossible. A rough estimate indicates one would have to read some 16,000 folio sides, and itemize some 160,000 entries.

Therefore, this Prologue proposes to analyse a different text, written by one who definitely did not envisage its publication: it contains the

notes made by Giacinto Gigli between the years 1608 and 1670; in regularly adding to his ‘diary’, he effectively created a chronicle of 17th-century Rome. Strangely, Gigli’s diary has not been the object of a systematic analysis, either, although, again, it has been plundered by historians of the period ever since the beginning of the 19th century.¹

The chronicler of Baroque Rome

Giacinto Gigli was born in Rome on November, 23, 1594 and died at the ripe age of 77 in December 1671, having spent all his life in the same ward, the “Rione della Pigna”—as so many of his fellow Romans must have lived their lives within the confines of a small part of this big town, only. But though, perhaps, they did not even get to know the great extent of the city itself—large tracts of it were uninhabited, and, certainly at night, very dangerous—, they almost certainly would never leave the town’s protective walls. However, Gigli did, for his family, of definite middle class origins,² owned some land just outside Porta S. Giovanni,³ as well as a number of houses in various parts of town.

Gigli went to school with the Jesuits and, in 1616, obtained a degree both in Roman and in Canon law. Obviously, he was a man of means, for he does not seem to have practised the law or, indeed, ever to have worked for his bread in any other capacity. He took care of the family interests, and fulfilled public functions on the intermediate level of the town’s government. In January 1631, Gigli was appointed to a three

¹ An exception must be made, however, for Barberito, who published the diary’s most recent edition: M. Barberito, ed., *Giacinto Gigli, Diario di Roma, I–II* (Rome 1994). To be quoted as: Gigli, Diario. In his introduction, Barberito does provide a somewhat thematic, though rather impressionistic and, strangely, judgemental analysis of the diary’s contents. However, I feel he fails to see the main issues underlying Gigli’s views. Barberito’s edition certainly is to be preferred to G. Ricciotti, *Giacinto Gigli, Diario* (Rome 1957), although Barberito’s notes are so copious as to be, almost, more of a burden than a help. Gigli’s life has been described by: A. Ademollo, *Giacinto Gigli e i suoi diarii del secolo XVII* (Florence 1877), which tries to make Gigli into a veritable anti-papal, anti-clerical chronicler. While this is a definite exaggeration, Barberito’s claim that Gigli writes as a true historian, “sine ira et studio”, is equally exaggerated. The only historian who used the diary’s ‘power slant’ to good effect, incorporating some of the data provided by it in an admirable study of politics in Baroque Rome, is: L. Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton 1992).

² Here, I disagree with Barberito, as he terms Gigli a member of the “piccola borghesia”, though later he retracts this statement: Gigli, Diario, *o.c.*, lxxv and vii.

³ Gigli, Diario, *o.c.*, 769.

months' term of office as wardmaster,⁴ a function which he was to hold six more times during the following decades. In April, 1638, he became "Priore di Roma", i.e. head of the 'College of Wardmasters' for what was to be the first of three times.⁵ Such positions must have given him a rather more privileged view of Roman life than the man in the street would have had. They also may explain why his diary is, often, well-informed indeed. For, at least at first sight, it seems Gigli was of the stuff chroniclers are made of, jotting down notes of an autobiographical character from an early age, and, from 1608 onwards, also keeping a diary of sorts. From 1619, the year of his marriage, onwards, the diary gets all his attention, though he was not always able to sit down and bring it up to date. Apparently, he experienced this as failing in his duty for when, during the first months of the Holy Year 1625 he was ill, he excused himself on paper for not having been able to properly describe this special year, expressing the hope, however, that he might live to see another one.⁶ The fact that his notebook was important to Gigli also appears from the care that—despite the occasional slip of the pen, as when he forgets to give a sentence its subject⁷—he bestowed on his manuscript. Sometimes he even assumed a fictive reader whom he directed from one note to another, as, e.g., in December 1624, when he records the "damnatio memorii" of that famous heretic, the former Jesuit Marc-Antonio de'Dominis, the also former archbishop of Spalato—modern-day Split—, turning his 'reader' to a note made in 1617, where this prelate's papal aspirations had been mentioned.⁸ Indeed, Gigli definitely must have gone through his notes at regular times, inserting cross-references linking what happened to earlier or later occurrences.⁹

Bearing all this in mind, the 'diary of Giacinto Gigli' yet does present some problems. First of all, terming Gigli's text a diary calls to mind the detailed descriptions that make the far more famous diaries kept by men like John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys such a delightful read. If one were to open the *Diario* with such examples in mind, one would be sorely disappointed. Mostly, Gigli records one or two items a month.

⁴ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 205.

⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 307.

⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 140.

⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 331, May 1640.

⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 139 and 58.

⁹ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 255; 266; 268; 283.

Sometimes, many months pass without even a single remark. This, obviously, poses the question of his selection criteria. It seems unanswerable. For even the following analysis has left me asking what really moved him to note the things which, in fact, he did note, knowing, as one does, for example from a cursory reading of the *avvisi*, that at the same time so many other things were happening in Rome that must have caught a shrewd observer's attention. The fact that Gigli really meant to keep a private diary, apparently not intending it ever would be used to inform and thus affect an audience, is of no great help, either. For while one would assume this stance must have influenced both his choice of what to record and of its presentation, there still seems no rational link between the private, effectively 'anonymous' nature of the text and its contents which are not nearly as outspoken as, for example, the equally anonymous "Pasquinate", the notes affixed to the statue of an ancient god that publicly and often vehemently voiced popular opinions in the papal capital—though, sometimes, these very notes may have been used by papal officials to uncover anti-governmental feelings among the population.

Notwithstanding these limitations, within the context of the questions raised in this book, Gigli's diary yet is a precious source indeed, as I hope to show through my reading of that part of it which covers the pontificate of Pope Urban VIII, which I have structured around seven major and, to my opinion, central themes.

The powers of nature

Obviously, in a town and a time wherein food supplies were of central concern to all but the most wealthy, the years when harvests were good and grain was abundant are mentioned by Gigli,¹⁰ and so are the moments when, for whatever reasons, the harvest fails, as in May 1634, when a hail storm almost totally destroys it and the price of bread doubles immediately,¹¹ or in the early months of 1637, when tempestuous rains batter the fields.¹² Whereas in an earlier age, a Christian chronicler might have attributed the vagaries of nature to a higher power, interpreting the bad spells as signs of God's wrath, Gigli does not seem

¹⁰ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 236.

¹¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 250; 282/283.

¹² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 289.

to have looked upon the world in that way. He does mention the severe draughts that reigned from July to November 1635, and the ensuing deaths are recorded as well, but he seems to accept that the daily prayers said during mass were to no avail.¹³ Yet, such a story as the one of the showers of grain that decked the earth all around Vienna in spring 1630 seems to him entirely trustworthy, precisely because proof of it, in the form of the grain itself, is brought to Rome.¹⁴

The annual inundations of the Tiber get no more than a passing reference; obviously, they were part and parcel of the cycle of Roman life, as were the many fires that regularly occurred.¹⁵ But such spells of extreme cold weather as the one of February, 1627, or, again, of November, 1640, which caused many people to die of a feverish catarrh—mostly the elderly, as well as women living in monasteries and children—were worthy of mention.¹⁶ When a house suddenly caved in, and many people died under the debris, Gigli relates the circumstances in considerable detail; indeed, the numerous accidents of this kind always get a note in his diary.¹⁷

However, looming largest in Gigli's tales are the threats posed by the plague that recurs almost annually. In August, 1630, the tale is particularly gruesome because rumour has it that the warring parties in northern Italy, led by the imperial troops, have started using a poison made of a certain evil substance that can induce the illness, which now is being spread by a criminal band of men who tour the country, even mixing it with the holy water people use to sprinkle themselves with in church. In Rome, too, panic reigns. The Pope, disregarding normal practice, orders the clergy to have priests suspected of this heinous crime to be tried and condemned by secular courts.¹⁸

Within the same context, Gigli always mentions the prayers and processions ordered by the Pope to ward off the danger of the plague, implying that in this respect, at least, the presence of a monarch who combines the temporal with the spiritual power is beneficial to Rome.¹⁹ On such occasions, no fewer than 40,000 people—i.e. nearly half the population—might gather together; Gigli, obviously moved himself,

¹³ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 271.

¹⁴ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 191.

¹⁵ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 212, and *passim*; 313, and *passim*.

¹⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 165; 304; 334.

¹⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 150; 297.

¹⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 197.

¹⁹ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 193; 195.

tells how the spectators, touched by the devotion of those participating in the procession and ashamed to be looking on in silence, only, start joining in as well.²⁰ When, in 1632, it seems that Rome has been spared, whereas so many other Italian towns have been devastated, he fully enters into the spirit of the festive *Te Deum* that is sung in Sta Maria in Aracoeli, the Town's 'civic' church near to the Capitoline Hill.²¹ He describes the five hour-long procession made up of everyone who matters in the city that, in March, carries a precious banner from St Peter's to be hung in Sta Maria Maggiore in perpetual memory of the Roman people's gratitude; flanking an image of the Madonna between Sts Peter and Paul painted by Pietro da Cortona—one of the few times Gigli actually mentions an artist—it shows the papal arms, surrounded by the Barberini bees, and the coat-of-arms of the Roman People.²² Gigli notes that 'just like Saint Gregory, carrying the image of the Madonna in procession around town, had obtained that Rome was liberated from the Plague, so Pope Urban, who (granting the jubilee for this cause) almost every Sunday went to Saint Mary Major to say mass, by means of that Image received God's grace'.²³

Yet, Gigli was ill-satisfied with the manner in which the thing had been organised. At the head of the procession had walked the 'common people', instead of as many noblemen and other persons of consequence as could have been mustered, and, of course, the city officials themselves; for why had they been forced to buy, at their own expense, sumptuous clothes et cetera, if not to shine on such occasions and show Rome's glory? While this observation, of course, represented Gigli's view of the world rather than of nature, it did so precisely in a situation wherein that world reacted to the forces of nature.

The powers of the world

Gigli's view of the world outside Rome—the world of Italy, of transalpine Europe and, of course, of the Mediterranean—was limited. Not, one must assume, through lack of information—for Rome, of course, was one of the best-informed towns of Europe and, indeed, of the

²⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 194.

²¹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 220.

²² Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 220/222.

²³ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 222.

world, with news quickly spreading from the offices of the Curia to the streets outside—but supposedly because he simply was not interested. Thus, such a major event as the Peace of Westphalia, in 1648—to take an example from the pontificate of Innocent X—is not mentioned, which is, actually, surprising because it ended decades of war that also had ravaged the Italian peninsula and had indeed caught Gigli's attention on several earlier occasions.

Yet it seems Gigli perceived international politics and the play of power only insofar as they directly affected Rome itself, or the policies of the Church. Thus, he became aware of the threats posed by the Ottoman Turks, which were increasingly felt during the late 1630s, perhaps only because these induced Pope Urban to order the entire clergy to participate in a number of large-scale processions.²⁴

It seems evident Gigli did not harbour any great illusions about the political power of the Pope in the temporal affairs of Europe. When Urban's nephew, Cardinal Francesco Barberini returned from his long peace-negotiating mission to France, Gigli dryly notes that he 'has accomplished nothing'.²⁵ When Francesco departs for, and returns from Spain on a like errand, Gigli feels he has not been able to make any headway, either.²⁶

The 'big world' entered Gigli's vision also whenever a new Catholic prince ascended the throne, or when an heir was borne to one of them or, equally important, when they obtained a victory in the wars that continually were waged during these decades—for then the Pope and the Sacred College would show themselves in the streets of Rome to assist at a celebratory *Te Deum* in an appropriate church.²⁷

In short, Gigli looks at things mostly from a Roman point of view. When problems arise between Urban and Venice, and the Most Serene Republic recalls its ambassador, he refers to the end of the squabble with a note saying that 'the Venetians were returned to the Pope's grace in the year 1639 and once more sent an ambassador to Rome'.²⁸ The death of Cardinal Richelieu is mentioned because he was supposed to be the evil genius who had instigated the Duke of Parma to rebel against the Pope. His successor as the French king's chief adviser

²⁴ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 317/318.

²⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 144.

²⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 158.

²⁷ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 199; 223; 225; 289; 313, et cetera.

²⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 282.

is recorded because, of course, he was a Roman—Giulio Mazzarini.²⁹ In 1643, the French royal couple, Louis XIII and Anne of Austria, went out of their way to thank God for the birth of an heir, donating an ensemble of solid silver statues, including the Madonna and a likeness of the new Dauphin to the shrine at Loreto; Gigli only seems to mention it because on its way to the famous sanctuary it was accompanied by a present for the Pope, consisting of books including an edition of the Pope's poems, but bound in such a costly way that their value even exceeded that of the gift to the Holy House.³⁰ Finally, it seems Gigli only records the revolution in Portugal, in 1640, because when the new king decided to send a high-ranking prelate as his ambassador to Rome, the Spanish government protested against this man being received by the Pope. Urban, however, as was his wont in the tangle of international politics, immediately declared himself the "Padre comune de' Christiani" and allowed the ambassador to enter town and be received by Cardinal Barberini.³¹ Alas, the poor Portuguese soon became the centre of locally-fought international intrigues as a pawn between the French and the Spanish factions in Rome. In August 1642, things came to such a head that many people died in various kinds of armed incidents. When the Archbishop of Lamego departed, the French ambassador, angry at the way the papal authorities handled the conflict, left as well.³²

Obviously, to Gigli power, and especially politics seemed a sordid game, often associated with devious and secretive dealings and fraught with many dangers. Thus, he knows papal representatives abroad are far from immune to the perils of power; indeed, the papal nuncios are constantly at risk of being poisoned.³³ But at home, too, life is anything but safe for those who are in power, or are connected with the power game, as appears from the complicated story of the double-dealing robber baron Giulio Pezzola, who heads a band of thirty bandits and, entering the Papal States from the Spanish *Regno*, the Kingdom of Naples, makes life miserable for the Pope's people. Cardinal Barberini finally decides to 'hire' this man's services, in order to have someone who knows how to combat the banditry that is rampant within the *Pat-*

²⁹ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 373.

³⁰ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 387.

³¹ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 355/356.

³² Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 358/360; 372/373.

³³ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, e.g. 189.

rimonium itself. Yet, the Cardinal soon finds himself implicated in a case of double-dealing, for Pezzola also appears to be mixed up in the secret conspiracies of a Neapolitan nobleman against the Spanish government; to make matters even more complex, the robber soon betrays this latter gentleman to the Spanish viceroy who, finally, has him killed.³⁴ With the French, always fishing in politically troubled waters implicated as well, the entire episode turned into a major diplomatic incident, causing both the French and Spanish ambassadors to boycott the papal audiences for some time. Yet, Gigli obviously thought that Rome and the papacy were the offended party.³⁵

Constantly people themselves involved in the power game, or only criticising those in power, were made to feel the dangers. That much became clear when, in 1643, the Pope's private preacher, Father Albri-
tuo, S.J., was dismissed because he was suspected of having given a sermon alluding to a prince's need to heed his subjects, as the Pope should heed his unruly vassal, the rebelling Duke of Parma.³⁶ On quite another plane, in the complex ceremonial battle surrounding Taddeo Barberini's elevation to the prefectorate of Rome, the coachman of the Venetian ambassador was threatened by the Barberini to halt his master's carriage in sign of respect; however, when he did indeed do so, he was forced to flee the Venetian embassy for the security of the Barberini-Colonna's castle of Paliano; subsequently, he was found murdered there.³⁷ To cite yet another case, in 1638, one of the Roman judges and his servant were seriously wounded by three ruffians, apparently men who felt they had an axe to grind with this official.³⁸

Yet, sometimes, Gigli seems to think that what befalls those who hold power serves them right. When, in April 1639, Monsignore Pietro Colangelo dies of his own blood, which had risen to his throat and suffocated him—the entire room in which he died being flooded by it, too—Gigli gives vent to a mixture of feelings. It seems he considered this death a case of—divine, supernatural?—retribution, the consequence of the arrogance of power.³⁹ For as 'Fiscal of the Campidoglio', which meant judicial representative of the Pope in town government,

³⁴ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 330.

³⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 323/324.

³⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 402.

³⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 210.

³⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 307.

³⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 318.

Colangelo had usurped a number of privileges which by right should have remained within the hands of the city council. Typically, the man had acquired his position by playing up to the Pope and the Barberini family.

The “Urbs” as a physical manifestation of power

To Gigli, the entire city seems an archipelago, made up of islands of power: power temporal, with sometimes entire wards but, more often, squares and *piazze* dominated by the palaces of the Roman nobility—there’s a ‘Piazza dei Signori Colonna’, a ‘Piazza dei Signori Farnesi’, and now, of course, a ‘Piazza dei Signori Barberini’, as well—but also power spiritual, as in the case of the big churches and the adjoining monasteries, dominated by the various religious Orders: a ‘Piazza dei Padri Gesuiti’, et cetera.

Whenever there is an occasion to celebrate, both noblemen and religious corporations use their part of town, including the surrounding houses and apartment buildings, as a ‘theatre’.⁴⁰

Thus, during the ceremonies accompanying the formal declaration of the 26 martyrs who died for their efforts in spreading the faith in Japan and had already worked many miracles, the Jesuits, counting three of their Order among this number, organised a marvellous feast, decking the façades of the Gesù and the adjacent houses with coloured lights and exhibiting a big canvas by the famous painter Arpino showing their three martyrs. The Franciscans, who had contributed the other blood witnesses, had shown theirs in the church of Aracoeli.⁴¹

When, some years later, the Jesuits celebrated their centenary, not only did they illuminate all their buildings in Rome for a number of days, but so did ‘many persons who bear them particular affection’.⁴² In the same year, they showed their trust in the power of propaganda by staging elaborate ceremonies during which portraits were exhibited of those who, among the Christian world’s spiritual and temporal princes, had been their benefactors. Gigli was quick to note that although this feast was meant to honour the dead, symbolised in the Gesù being

⁴⁰ E.g. Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 147, 171.

⁴¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 166; 170/171.

⁴² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 321.

entirely decked in black, the church's white marble pilasters were left in view, which, strangely, produced a 'cheerful effect'.⁴³

The Jesuits seem to have been specifically adept at making their presence felt. In August, 1640, Gigli recorded the celebration of the feast of St. Ignatius, which once more turned out to be a show of the Order's power, this time not only by a public exhibition of the portraits of all cardinals who had ever studied at the *Collegio Romano*, including the three Barberini ones, but also by a display of the likenesses of all the published scholars they had produced, and as well as of pictures of the numerous towns all over the world where the Order had an house.⁴⁴

Then, of course, there are those parts of papal Rome which are dominated by a 'foreign' nation, either because that is where their embassy is—thus, e.g., the area around the Palazzo Farnese after it had been sold to the French government—, or because it is a part of town inhabited by a considerable number of families who had migrated to 'the City' from other Italian city-states. Among them, the Florentines are most conspicuous. They, too, like to manifest their power when occasion arises.⁴⁵ Sometimes, in order to do so, they join forces with powerful families, whose protection or favour they need. The Florentine 'nation', for example, was heavily involved in trade and finance, and therefore needed to curry favour with the powers-that-be.

Inevitably, families who boast a saint among their members come in for Gigli's special mention. Thus, he tells of the Corsini with 'their' Sant'Andrea; the family paid handsomely for ceremonies celebrating the sanctification of their holy relative. Moreover, since they belong to a 'foreign' nation—in this case the Florentine one, again—the entire group showed its pride in staging grand festivities, using the occasion to also display the likenesses of all the other Florentines who had been either beatified or raised to the honours of the altar; for good measure, they threw in the portraits of the five Florentines who had been popes, as well as the coats-of-arm of the sixty cardinals produced by their native town over the centuries.⁴⁶

The Sacred College looms large over the picture Gigli paints of papal Rome. He seems to hold its members in some traditional reverence

⁴³ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 323.

⁴⁴ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 332/333.

⁴⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 133.

⁴⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 177/178.

though he knows them to be the favourites either of the reigning pope himself—i.e. his relatives and, as when the Barberini allied themselves with the Colonna, some of their in-laws as well⁴⁷—, or of the secular princes of Europe.⁴⁸ The fact that few men made it to the cardinalate on their own steam is obvious if only because Gigli, whenever a cardinal dies, never fails to mention whose ‘creature’ he was. Indeed, it seems unlikely Gigli had a really high opinion of the Princes of the Church. He knew that one could buy one’s way into the Sacred College, as, for example, the Genoese banker Lomellini did, who purchased the position of treasurer of the Apostolic Chamber for 80.000 scudi knowing that if or rather when the Pope needed some ready money, he would make him a cardinal, which would force him to resign this office that, then, could be put up for sale by the Camera Apostolica once more. Gigli is having a quiet laugh when, soon after, Lomellini dies.⁴⁹ Some men, however, did succeed this way, as, e.g., Francesco Rapacciolo, the son of a wealthy Roman draper, who used his family’s money to acquire the same office and then became a cardinal in 1643.⁵⁰

Though Gigli, as so many in his time, did believe in the natural, hierarchical order of society, thinking that whatever the ways one reached the cardinalate, a cardinal at least should be of noble birth, he forgave his Eminence Pignatelli his ‘base lineage’ because being ‘dextrous in affairs’ obviously made up for it.⁵¹ Nor did he fail to mention that Cardinal Rondinini was the son of a mother who was the natural, i.e. illegitimate daughter of Cardinal Zacchia. When Giovanni Giacomo Panzirolo became a cardinal, he the offspring of a Roman dress maker, Gigli described him as a man with ‘nice manners, a noble way of dealing with people, and possessing the art of making himself thought well of’; thus, he had become the friend and confidant of Cardinal Barberini, rose to be papal nuncio in Spain, and then entered the Sacred College.⁵²

The cardinals were manifestly present in Rome’s townscape, with their “antica pompa” which shows in numerous big and small ways, if only in the carriages and litters in which they even were allowed to enter the churches. From 1625 onwards, such elements of visual

⁴⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 171.

⁴⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 158.

⁴⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 388/389.

⁵⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 396.

⁵¹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 131.

⁵² Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 395/396.

presence were enhanced when it was decided that their carriage horses were to carry red plumes.⁵³ But the greater change came in 1630, when the Pope ordered that the cardinals from now on be addressed as ‘Eminencies’, instead of being named ‘Illustrious’, a mode of address now so common as to denote next to nothing. Up till then, only the seven prince-electors of the Empire, and the Knight Grand Master of the Order of St John had been styled ‘Your Eminency’!⁵⁴

Gigli was not much given to musing on the fine arts and their products in Rome, unless, perhaps, those that seemed to particularly celebrate its status as ‘The City’. The names of the architects, painters and sculptors who created and decorated the physical city in which he lived and whose many new buildings he must have seen rising around him—such as the huge mass of the new Palazzo Barberini—are conspicuously absent from his diary, excepting a few rather unexplainable instances. Nor does he always mention the occasions when papal policy regarding the ancient monuments added lustre to the town’s almost mythical antiquity. Yet, an explanation for the fact that the death of two antiquaries comes in for a short note,⁵⁵ might be found precisely in his obvious civic pride for, with their knowledge, they had contributed to the fame of Rome as the Eternal City. Such an explanation might also hold for Gigli’s rather extensive description of the excavation of the triumphal arch of the Emperor Claudius, ordered by Cardinal Barberini in 1641, at which, moreover, as Prior of Rome, he was present himself, even descending into the digs to have a candle-lit look at the sculptures and take home some pieces of yellow marble.⁵⁶ Also, he does recount that the Pope decided to have the name of Alexander the Great removed from the two huge marble statues on Monte Cavallo because scholars had told him that, if these statues were indeed the fifth-century works of Phidias and Praxiteles, respectively, they could not very well represent a man who had lived two centuries later. Yet, Gigli does not explain the Pope’s action that, anyhow, should have followed the other option, as the statues do, after all, bear Alexander’s face.⁵⁷ Perhaps the Pope reasoned he would rather have the works of famous sculptors

⁵³ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 152.

⁵⁴ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 193.

⁵⁵ Gigli, *Diary*, *o.c.*, 298.

⁵⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 346.

⁵⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 251. Cfr. C. d’Onofrio, *Un popolo di statue racconta* (Rome 1990).

adorn his capital than the likeness of a man whom only some of his predecessors had chosen as an example and namesake—and they not the most holy ones. Gigli probably would have agreed.

He certainly voiced his opinion more openly when Urban ordered that the bronze fittings be taken from the architraves of the Pantheon, as the papal foundries needed the metal to forge canon. Gigli described and obviously fell in with the dismay of the Roman populace that ‘such a beautiful Antiquity, the only thing to have remained intact from the plundering of the barbarians, and, indeed, a work that could truly be said to be eternal’ was now being dismantled. When it was found that the bronze was mixed with silver and gold and, therefore, unfit for its proposed use, the Pope hastily decided to stop ruining the building and ordered the architraves to be covered again.⁵⁸ To this passage Gigli added information which came from the year 1632 when the Pope chose to commemorate the fact that, besides for the guns that had been founded, he had taken the bronze to be fashioned into the four huge columns that supported Bernini’s baldachin over St Peter’s tomb, with two huge inscriptions that now were attached to the ancient monument; Gigli approvingly cites the texts in their entirety.⁵⁹

As to the modern embellishment of the town, a near-complete silence reigns in Gigli’s diary. Thus it remains unclear why, of all possible artists he could have mentioned, he selected for the record the sculptor Francesco Mochi whose huge statue of Veronica in 1640 was put up in its niche in one of the four pillars carrying Michelangelo’s grand cupola of St. Peter’s.⁶⁰ The absence of references to cultural manifestations *stricto sensu* is even stranger in view of the fact that Gigli was something of an erudite, who wrote poetry and dabbled in philosophy and archaeology.⁶¹ Mentioning the unhappy episode of Bernini’s bell tower for St Peter’s, which collapsed because of unsound construction, seems occasioned only by the Cavaliere’s discomfiture that caused him to fall ill and, so rumour had it, nearly to die.⁶² As to the rebuilding of the Fontana di Trevi, in 1643, which entailed both its reorientation and its decoration with, of course, the Barberini bees, it may have been mentioned only as a case of concealed criticism, because Gigli added

⁵⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 154.

⁵⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 154.

⁶⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 334.

⁶¹ Ademollo, *o.c.*, 9–11.

⁶² Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 341.

that it all was done because the Pope wanted to be able to see the fountain from his summer residence on the Quirinal Hill.⁶³

The only exception to what almost seems to have been Gigli's rule occurred in November 1626, when the consecration of new St Peter's elicited a longish description of the history of the second Petrine basilica, and of Urban's finishing touch, the altar and its bronze columns, as well as of the solemn procession which wound through Rome from Piazza Venezia to St Peter's and continued all around the new church.⁶⁴

Yet, despite his seeming lack of interest—at least in his diary notes—in the city's growing physical splendour, Rome, to Gigli, is an object of immense pride that cannot but lure foreigners to come and see its many glories and great power, whether they hail from Europe or from farther climes, as in the case of the 'nephew of Prester John' who arrived from Asia with a delegation of Franciscan friars.⁶⁵ That people should bring strange things to it to him seems only natural, as when, a century after the first time they ever saw an elephant, the Romans once more could go and gaze at such a strange beast.⁶⁶

Understandably, Gigli is afraid for his town's fate, especially when the wars in northern Italy escalate. It is then that the traumatic memory of the infamous Sack of Rome, which had occurred a century earlier, surfaces again, in a description of the horrendous cruelties now perpetrated by the present emperor's German soldiers who, being the heretics they are, once more are bent on devastating Italy and damaging the Church. They violate the 'sacred virgins', desecrate the churches and use the holy oil to wax their boots and, sacrilege if ever there was, affix the host as a seal to their letters.⁶⁷ Rome, inevitably, is made to feel the consequences of this threat. Prices rise, the quality of the bread deteriorates, and each day brings new taxes. People grumble,⁶⁸ and, of course, their grumbling is directed at the powers-that-be.

⁶³ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 395.

⁶⁴ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 160/161.

⁶⁵ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 171; 231.

⁶⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 191.

⁶⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 181.

⁶⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 181; 205; 211, 212, et cetera.

Papal power

In many ways, Gigli was a cynic, who held few illusions about the papacy or the people's views of it. When Pope Gregory XV died in July, 1623, Gigli looked back upon his pontificate and noted how many unrealistic hopes the Roman people had invested in the Bolognese cardinal, longing for someone and something new after the nearly sixteen years Paul V had sat on St Peter's throne. Soon, however, they realized the good things they had hoped for would not materialize, while the bad remained, with the public debt increasing alarmingly and even the sacred papal treasure chest, in its vault in Castel St Angelo showing its bare boards. Of course, as always people had not blamed the pontiff himself but his nephew, in this case Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi; however, Gigli seems to imply that this is a rather silly attitude.⁶⁹

As to the mechanism that finally produced a new pope during the 1623-conclave in which 60—of the maximum number of 70—cardinals participated, Gigli had no illusions, either. If he privately believed the Holy Spirit entered into the process at all, he concealed such an emotion even to his diary, in which he openly declared it was all a power game in which, in this case, the former Cardinal-*Padrone* Scipione Borghese, the nephew of the late Paul V, and his faction set out to have one of their allegiance elected,⁷⁰ obviously to ensure the continuance of their own power. Gigli, as well as the *conclavisti* themselves, felt that evil but evidently this-worldly forces were at work: both Cardinal Barberini and others let it be known they thought they had been slowly poisoned—with Maffeo maintaining that a bunch of flowers had been used to do so.⁷¹ Yet, despite the fact that any mention of Heavenly interference is lacking, Gigli strangely seems to be of two minds about the famous story telling that before Cardinal Barberini was finally chosen by the ballot, a flight of bees had been seen to alight above the cubicle where he slept, forming itself into a papal tiara.⁷²

Obviously, whatever Gigli's personal feelings about Urban, the fact that the Pope was the supreme power made anything that happened

⁶⁹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 120–121.

⁷⁰ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 122–124.

⁷¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 131, 132.

⁷² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 125.

to him important news. Thus, when Urban nearly collapsed during mass, the information was added to the diary.⁷³ When he fell seriously ill in April 1637 that was recorded, too, as were the other ailments that from then on continued to plague him.⁷⁴ Implicitly, perhaps, Gigli was expressing his fear that the Pope might die. True, this would bring a *Sede vacante* and thus a period during which the town would rule itself, as of old. But Gigli was realistic enough to know that without the restraints of papal power, it would be chaos that ruled, rather than he and his fellow town-officials.⁷⁵ Indeed, when the Pope recovered, almost everybody was overjoyed, and the French ambassador ordered a display of fireworks, while the ‘People of Rome’ had a *Tē Deum* sung at Sta Maria in Aracoeli, and grain was dispensed for free.⁷⁶ Not everyone was happy, though. Cardinal Laudivio Zacchia, from Genoa, had held high hopes of being elected after Urban had died—and so had his relatives. Now the poor man died himself—of chagrin, it was said.⁷⁷

The Pope’s power as a temporal ruler in his own state was keenly felt by the Romans if only because, as in the olden days, he or his representatives were the only ones who could keep a rein on the soldiers who, of course, one needed but dreaded as well. Thus, when the number of troops in Rome increased during the war with Parma in 1641, it took the authority and, so Gigli implies, courage of the acting Cardinal Camerlengo, Antonio Barberini, to stop the mercenaries from creating havoc.⁷⁸

Papal power was manifest, too, when individual subjects, however powerful they thought themselves, failed to comply with the rules of the state. Thus, for example, the Duke of Ceri, resenting the way papal officials tried to manage the judicial affairs of his duchy and threatening them with guns, even wounding one of the policemen accompanying them, was imprisoned in Castel St Angelo and then banished to Avignon.⁷⁹ Mario Frangipani, too, for all his family’s power,

⁷³ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 266.

⁷⁴ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 307.

⁷⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 295.

⁷⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 297; 298.

⁷⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 298.

⁷⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 353; for subsequent cases: 354, 355.

⁷⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 330.

was sent to prison when he murdered someone on his estates.⁸⁰ Both were released only when their military capacities were needed in the war against Parma.⁸¹

Indeed, the Pope's power to punish evidently made much impact if we judge it by the frequency of the tales told by Gigli about crime and its consequences. Obviously, he felt that the presence of precisely such a power was of the greatest importance. This first appears from the descriptions he gives of the *Sede vacante*-periods, during which Rome and the Catholic part of Europe held their breath. Awaiting the outcome of the conclave, for the time being Rome was ruled again by its ancient, elected officials: Gigli's 'class' of people. But whatever he may have thought about the harshness of papal government, he well realized that without it the town lay prey to almost unrestricted violence. Thus, during the barely two weeks that passed between the death of Gregory XV and the election of Urban VIII, the city was racked by theft and murder, with many corpses simply left in the streets, or thrown into the Tiber, decapitated and otherwise mutilated. Policemen were molested, and one of the ward-masters was stabbed with a knife; as a matter of course, the unruly soldiers serving the foreign ambassadors, who even in regulated times only could be kept under guard with some difficulty, now took their freedom and ran riot.⁸²

However, crimes which almost daily occurred such as 'ordinary' murder came in for Gigli's attention, too, as when a young man strangled his older relative: his hand was cut off, in front of the house where he had committed his crime, and he was then decapitated and his head put on a pike on the piazza nearby.⁸³ Some of the deaths Gigli records were bizarre indeed, having an almost Boccaccian ring to them. In one case, a noble nun who wanted her paramour help her get out of the monastery, had a frightful shock. The young man, thinking to be clever, had himself closed into a box that was to be delivered to her. As the servant who was to carry the box tarried in doing so, the man suffocated and was discovered dead when the nun opened her present. Finally, she had to confess all to the abbess, and the Pope ordered that

⁸⁰ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 334.

⁸¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 364/365.

⁸² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 125.

⁸³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 179.

she be immured alive.⁸⁴ In another, complicated case, a girl was forced to marry a wealthy suitor whom she, secretly loving another, disliked intensely but who was preferred by her parents; it all ended in a rather farcical tragedy of disguise and mistaken identities in which she died, but Gigli notes the details at extraordinary length and with apparent relish.⁸⁵ Equally revealing is the case of the female convert who murdered one nun and seriously wounded two others who had come out to see what caused the alarm. The Pope immediately ordered that she be strangled in the monastery itself. When, before dying, she confessed, revealing, however, that she had acted on the orders of one of the principal nuns, a lady from the highest nobility, nay, a princess from the house of Aldobrandini—family who had risen to power and wealth through Pope Clement VIII—this woman was immediately imprisoned for further interrogation. Obviously, in view of the sensitivity of this case, it was dealt with in the greatest secrecy, but despite her high rank, this nun, too, was put to death in the monastery. Thus, it seemed, the Pope's power to punish was absolute, and nobody was spared.⁸⁶

When a prelate decided to kill one of his creditors, and took refuge in a church, papal officials employed an undercover agent to lure him home on the pretext that he would be safe, there; subsequently, the man was jailed and sentenced to decapitation, probably also because his house was found to contain a number of “Pasquinate”—Gigli does not tell whether these were directed against the ruling powers, but this seems rather likely. Afterwards, the culprit's head was publicly exhibited.⁸⁷

As arson was a crime that regularly occurred but, apparently, left little proof, and thus no suspect who could be tried and punished, it only got a passing mention.⁸⁸ When, however, conspiracies against the Pope's life were discovered, Gigli does not fail to describe them.⁸⁹ Especially the Centini-conspiracy,⁹⁰ involving an ageing cardinal and his nephew who tried to poison the Pope, gets full coverage, showing that however secret the proceedings of the Inquisition, the major elements were

⁸⁴ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 270.

⁸⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 244/246.

⁸⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 231.

⁸⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 270/271.

⁸⁸ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 212/213.

⁸⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 192; 198; 249; 250.

⁹⁰ Cfr. also chapter VIII of this book.

made fully known to a wider public⁹¹ perhaps precisely because the authorities hoped they might serve as a warning. Of course, people did well to heed such warnings, for everything connected with public speculations about the Pope's death was treated with the utmost severity. When the secretary of the papal nuncio to Spain was found to have betrayed his master's secret instructions to the Spaniards, this, in itself, was a serious crime. But the fact that he also predicted the reigning Pope's imminent demise got him the death penalty: he was beheaded. If he had not been a priest, he would have been quartered alive.⁹²

Both an acute awareness and, also, some almost overt criticism of the personal power not of the Pope but of the system which he symbolised is voiced when Gigli describes how, in 1640, the *Camera Apostolica* allows the reduction of the interest rates on the loans contracted by private persons and public entities alike. Obviously, the first to profit from this decision was the papacy itself, which had incurred huge debts precisely during Urban's pontificate. Those who had subscribed these loans, including a great number of pious foundations, lost part of their income and, even worse, part of their capital as well, Gigli explains.⁹³ However, when the Pope orders extensive and expensive fortifications to be constructed on the Gianicolo Hill, Gigli is more than usually positive in his praise, for this creates jobs for thousands of Romans. He is equally positive about the Pope's decision to lift the obligation to attend mass on a number of religious feasts, obviously to allow the Roman artisans to use these days to do some productive work; he does note, however, that many simply continue to treat these days as free ones.⁹⁴

This last example indicates Gigli was fully conscious of the power of the Pope's arm spiritual as well. Perhaps it was made most visible when it was wielded in the processes against heretics of all sorts that occurred every now and then though certainly not as often as 19th-century historiography has made people think. In Gigli's view, heresy did, of course, exist. Marc'Antonio de'Dominis, mentioned already, was a prelate of Lutheran leanings, who had proclaimed himself pope in England and had created no less than 34 cardinals. He was brought

⁹¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 266/268.

⁹² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 333.

⁹³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 335.

⁹⁴ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 374; 388; 373/374.

to Rome, put in prison and, finally, died after having renounced his heresies. Now, however, it was discovered that even while serving time in the Inquisition's prison he had continued corresponding with the English government. Therefore, his body was exhumed and publicly burned on Campo de' Fiori, together with his likeness.

Another heretic, who, though a priest, had felt free to say mass as many times a day as he liked, was burned alive.⁹⁵ Also, public punishment was meted out to priests who had sinned against their office by indulging in carnal relations; they usually were imprisoned first and then sent to the galleys.⁹⁶

In 1634, Gigli became vividly aware of the Pope's spiritual power once more, as Urban decreed that all those who held a bishopric should take their leave from Rome and take up residence in their see as was, of course, what Canon Law demanded. Grumbling because the timing could not have been worse—it rained heavily and soon it started snowing, too—the prelates prepared themselves for departure and, though many procrastinated, finally left. According to Gigli, they never forgave the Pope, a fact which, or so he wrote, did explain why, after Urban's death, his Barberini relatives, fearing revenge, hastily fled the City.⁹⁷

Among the main instruments of the papal arm spiritual were the jubilees that conceded all kinds of graces to the faithful, though, as Gigli clearly realized, these had a rather obvious material side as well. When, in December 1624, Pope Urban opened the Holy Door to commence the celebrations of the next Holy Year, 1625, Gigli was quick to note that, the amount of pilgrims being far less than expected because of the wars in northern Italy, the Pope cleverly suspended the declaration of indulgences outside Rome, thus using his spiritual power to lure the faithful to the Eternal City after all.⁹⁸ He was aware that Urban wielded this weapon quite often, as with the universal jubilee which he declared in April, 1628, to create a context for two weeks of prayer for peace among the Christian princes: it did indeed cause many pilgrims to come to St Peter's.⁹⁹ The occasion was repeated in 1629 and subsequent years.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 58; 139.

⁹⁶ E.g. for a number of different crimes Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 330.

⁹⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 255.

⁹⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 139/140.

⁹⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 172/173.

¹⁰⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 176 and *passim*.

All the while, Gigli was particularly aware of the Pope's power to change the time-hallowed order of things, as when Urban, to implore God's blessing for his pontificate, declared yet another a jubilee; instead of asking people to attend the traditional churches where, after confession and communion, they could obtain an indulgence, he ordered that in each city-ward two churches would have that privilege; also, he freed people of their obligation to fast and to give alms before an indulgence could be granted.¹⁰¹ Once again when, in 1629, Urban forbids the traditional procession, on the night of Maundy Thursday, of the town's innumerable confraternities to St Peter's, there to be shown the 'Sacred Face', the 'Veronica', and the Sacred Lance, of St Longinus, because these candle-lit cavalcades are increasingly used by lay people and clergy alike to show themselves rather than to add to the devotional spirit of things, Gigli completely agrees: he feels that the potential of such processions should concentrate on the essence, for example through the impact of those who flagellate themselves and through the cartoons depicting the mysteries associated with the various patron saints of these religious companies.¹⁰² Yet another occasion occurs when, due to the perils of the plague, the three basilicas that are without the walls cannot be reached: the Pope confers their spiritual properties on three otherwise not so privileged churches within the town's precincts.¹⁰³

Often, though, Gigli was rather ambivalent when confronted with such manifestations of papal power. On the one hand, something definitely like pride rings through when he tells of the power the Pope has in declaring such a jubilee for the entire Christian world.¹⁰⁴ But when, in the 1640s, the number of jubilees increases, while the political situation gets worse and, indeed, the need for prayer is greater than ever, Gigli also notes that the Pope, or his relatives, use the occasion to very materially raise taxes in the wake of such concessions of spiritual grace.¹⁰⁵

Regarding other visualizations of papal power, Gigli, being the proper Roman he was, held mixed views, too. Thus, when a church was

¹⁰¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 133.

¹⁰² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 177.

¹⁰³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, in 1625: 144; again in 1630: 191.

¹⁰⁴ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 181.

¹⁰⁵ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 425.

dedicated to Pope Urban I, the Saint who had baptized St. Cecilia, outside the Porta Appia, to commemorate, also, the reigning pope, he gives the news a few non-committal lines, only.¹⁰⁶ The tale of the discovery of an egg produced by a cock belonging to an old woman, which showed a sun, and, over the sun, a bee, while under it the letters C and B could be read—Gigli does not explain them but presumably they were thought to stand for Christ, or for the Church, and for Barberini?—is told without much comment, either, though he does add that Cardinal Antonio Barberini gave the woman 10 scudi, and that the Pope ‘took it as a prodigious occurrence.’¹⁰⁷ But when, in 1640, the town council was forced, or forced itself to accept that a statue of the Pope be placed on the Campidoglio, the proud, but really empty seat of Rome’s former civic independence, Gigli approvingly recounts how, significantly, Bernini’s likeness of Pope Urban is moved there by night and put in its place without ‘any sign of public joy.’¹⁰⁸

For Gigli was morbidly sensitive when it came to the relationship between papal and town government. He gives a glimpse of the power structures underlying Roman society when he describes the funeral of Carlo Barberini, first prince of Palestrina, the Pope’s non-cardinal brother. It is paid for by the town, because the two conservators of that year both are indebted to the Pope and his family, the one because a brother of his was made cardinal and the other because his brother had been given a canonry in the chapter of St Peter’s. Gigli implies, somewhat sourly, that, thus, the two officials ensured their re-election for another period, or even longer.¹⁰⁹

Another occasion when the actual power structure surfaced occurred when the town council decided that an inscription commemorating the Pope’s acts should be put up in Sta Maria in Aracoeli, and that the Cardinal-*Padrone* should be honoured with a statue. Gigli clearly thinks little of this plan which, he writes, was concocted by the two conservators of the day, who wished to enter Urban’s and Cardinal Francesco’s good graces, they, too, demeaning themselves in order to have their term of office prolonged. Wisely, or so Gigli thinks, Barberini refuses, only consenting that his name be modestly mentioned in the inscrip-

¹⁰⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 284/285.

¹⁰⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 332.

¹⁰⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 331/332.

¹⁰⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 196.

tion for his papal uncle.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile Francesco's brother Taddeo Barberini, who succeeded his father Carlo as second Prince of Palestrina, and was created Prefect of Rome in 1631, came in for serious criticism precisely within the sensitive context of papal-urban relations, especially when he convinced his papal uncle that he should be given such privileges as formerly belonged to the town's conservators.¹¹¹

The power of the papal relatives

Indeed, Gigli was markedly critical of the papal relatives, who, as a group, during Urban's pontificate are among the persons mentioned most in his diary, indicating the importance of their role in Rome.

At the beginning of the new reign, Gigli seems to have decided to give the new pope's family the benefit of the doubt. When Urban, two months after his election, conferred the red hat on his nephew Francesco, Gigli wrote about the latter as a 'boy of whom much is expected, and who is very worthy of his new dignity'.¹¹² Subsequently, although the occasions on which Cardinal Barberini appears on Gigli's stage are not numerous, he always is mentioned with respect.

Thus when, in April 1636, a veritable mini-war erupts between the French and the Savoyards on the one hand, and the Spanish on the other, the price Rome paid for having such large foreign communities at a time when all of Europe was at war. With a new "sacco" threatening, Barberini is informed. Not only does he send the town's policemen in full force, to help contain the two groups within the confines of two separate squares, but he also appears in person, which helps to restrain them and prevents the worst, for no deadly casualties occur.¹¹³

In February 1637, the Tiber overflows once more, this time coming up to the Corso. Cardinal Barberini asks to be punted through the streets that have been inundated, to distribute bread, and Gigli adds that this is 'an act which once more shows him to be, as always, a pious and really good prince'.¹¹⁴ However, Gigli's seeming partiality for the Cardinal may be partly explained by the fact that, in 1638 and again

¹¹⁰ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 248.

¹¹¹ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 341.

¹¹² Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 132.

¹¹³ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 283/284.

¹¹⁴ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 292/293.

in 1641, Francesco confirmed his election to the office of prior of the ward-masters,¹¹⁵ which, of course, was the climax of Giacinto's career. Indeed, there must have been some special relationship between Gigli and the Cardinal for even in 1644, when Gigli's name had not been put in the urn, the Cardinal had him appointed master of the Campitelliward.¹¹⁶

Yet, Gigli definitely was less charmed by the other Barberini men. Indeed, he mentions them mostly in a negative context. One of the reasons certainly was that from the late 1620s onwards the threat of war caused the Pope to demand ever more and heavier taxes from his capital. At the beginning, the 'People of Rome' flatly refused. Gigli, without giving his personal opinion, does note that many complained there was no need for these taxes in the first place 'because the Pope continually presented gross sums to his brother, and his nephews, who held the post of General of Holy Church, and other military functions, as well as buying them principalities and lordships'.¹¹⁷ He also notes how, as the nephews of the previous popes begin to die, the functions which their uncles had given to them were all redistributed to the reigning pope's religious relatives.¹¹⁸ With some glee he notes that, on the imminent extinction of the House of Aldobrandini, the last representative—a girl called Olympia, who had entered a nunnery while worth not only a principedom but also some four million scudi in gold—was snatched before the very eyes of the greedy Barberini and married off to a Borghese boy by his scheming family.¹¹⁹

When, in 1639, the Pope orders a new monastery to be built on Monte Cavallo, near the papal summer palace, to house his two Carmelite nieces who used to live in Florence, Gigli seems faintly displeased. This monastery, subsequently named 'of the Barberini nuns' was, after all, built solely because of Urban's affection for these two girls.¹²⁰

Against this background, not surprisingly it is always the Roman, rather than the papal side Gigli takes when local loyalties are wounded. This occurred, for example, when Prince Colonna wilfully got into

¹¹⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 307; 341.

¹¹⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 424.

¹¹⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 190.

¹¹⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 225, when Ludovisi died; 236, when Borghese died; 309, when Aldobrandini died, all three former cardinal-nephews.

¹¹⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 308/309. Cfr. 416/417 for further details.

¹²⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 319; 325.

a fight with two young Roman noblemen of the ancient Caetani-family who were accompanied by a few other local boys. The next day, the imbroglio continues and in consequence one of the Caetani dies. 'The whole of Rome was in an uproar', Gigli writes, and most people, including the Sacred College, the foreign ambassadors and the Roman barons sided with the Caetani¹²¹—surely, we are inclined to conclude, because they wanted to embarrass the Barberini, who had related themselves to a 'foreign' family: the Colonna were from Naples.

Gigli's limited partiality for the Barberini family surfaced particularly when Donna Anna Barberini, the wife of the Pope's nephew Taddeo, decided she wanted a piece of the mortal remains of St Philip Neri, the founder of the Oratorians. His was about the only body of a saint still available in its entirety and, moreover, frequently shown to the people of Rome, who felt him to be their particular property. Thus, when the lady, waving a papal permission, asked that she be given her relics, public commotion ensued, and the monks decided to hide St Philip; rumour had it that when they removed him from the casket, the lamp that always burned before it went out all by itself. Ugly words were spoken by the papal officials who came to support Donna Anna's claim, but the Oratorian fathers, not to be accused of disobeying the letter of the Pope's orders, only relinquished the reliquary which held the saint's heart. After some months, the body was returned to its chapel, though, Gigli added—as if to indicate that papal power always would have its way—it did lack some parts ...¹²²

In the late 1630s, Urban's health declines, and he starts relying increasingly on his relatives to manage the affairs of Church and state. Consequently, the Barberini presence in Rome becomes ever more notable and, almost inevitably, criticised. In the first years of the next decade, when war breaks out, the Pope finally gets disgusted with the way the Cardinal-*Padrone* handles things and, according to Gigli, a terrible scene occurs during which the Pope, stamping his feet, throws his beret in the face of another high official present. Subsequently, he even forbids Cardinal Francesco to attend the war council.¹²³ It soon appeared that the Cardinal, while aware of the fact that his brother Taddeo—who had succeeded his father as general of Holy Church—

¹²¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 251/253.

¹²² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 305/306.

¹²³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 361.

had completely mismanaged the military side of the war, had yet felt he could not intervene. Now the Pope was rumoured to have said he finally knew what sort of relatives he had: the first one a saint, who, however, did not know how to work a miracle, meaning Francesco; the second one a friar, who, however, knew no patience, meaning Cardinal Antonio, the Elder, the Capuchin; the third an Oratorian who, however, did not know how to talk, meaning Cardinal Antonio, the Younger; and the last one a general who, however, did not know how to handle a sword, meaning Don Taddeo.¹²⁴

With even the Pope critical of his own family, the outside world could easily use the Barberini as an excuse for acting against Urban. Gigli knew this, too. When the league of Italian states that, in 1643, attacked the Papal States, told the public it did so to punish the papal nephews who had usurped too much power, Gigli wrote they were deceived by the Devil. For surely they opposed the power of the Pope, Christ's vicar, the head of the Church; indeed, rather than laying siege to Barberini castles, they conquered towns and villages belonging to the Church, and meanwhile even served the Barberini interests, for the various members of the family only grew richer because of the offices they now held as army commanders.¹²⁵

Ceremony and ritual: ephemeral power?

Surprisingly, it is not the changes in the urban texture, expressing the need of popes, Church prelates, Roman noblemen and religious institutions to put their permanent mark on his city that Gigli wanted to record. Unmistakably, the larger part of his notes consist of descriptions of power manifestations that, while they might be visible for three or four days, were more likely to be over within three or four hours: the numerous ceremonies that were the visualisation of spiritual and temporal power in the streets of Rome as ever so many individual and collective acts of ritual behaviour.

Almost all major religious ceremonies get at least a passing mention in Gigli's notes: solemn benedictions, public consistories, the creation of new cardinals, their cavalcades when they went to receive the red hat,

¹²⁴ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 364.

¹²⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 393.

processions, et cetera.¹²⁶ Why, quite often, Gigli decided upon a more or less detailed description, is difficult to grasp. Always, however, in such cases his notes contain illuminating details.

Thus he tells that during the annual festivities commemorating the Pope's coronation, the torch is put to two statues: the one, representing Time, is allowed to turn to ashes, but the other, representing Virtue, remains triumphantly intact.¹²⁷ If a procession is particularly splendid, as the one that annually, on the 5th of October, celebrates the victory of Lepanto, Gigli even describes the entire route it takes. He tells of the huge canvas that shows the battle itself and the moralistic paintings depicting the 'happy' and the 'sad' mysteries of the rosary, the ones coloured and the others in "chiaroscuro" as befitted their subject matter, and, finally, the 'glorious' mysteries, in the brightest colours and surrounded by cherubim and seraphim. He describes in great detail the huge chariot carrying a tower-like silver tabernacle with the image of the Madonna of the Rosary, which is greatly revered and has been painted by a saintly friar of the Dominican Order; at the Madonna's feet, a chorus of little boys dressed like angels sings 'most sweetly'—these the last of the groups of singers who have walked along, spread over the cavalcade at regular intervals. Moreover, Gigli notes, with apparent approbation, the great number of orphan girls who, on this occasion, are given a dowry to enable them to marry, but for the seven last ones, who wear huge golden crowns 'which seems to indicate that they want to show that they are going to dedicate their virginity to God'. Finally, however, after noting a number of high-placed persons who participate in this ritual, Gigli singles out the Pope's brother and his sister-in-law for special mention.¹²⁸

The longest description of such ceremonies probably is the one of the procession of the so-called "Madonna della Grotta", in August 1635, which, using Gigli's notes, even now one could follow from street corner to street corner, albeit not from triumphal arch to triumphal arch—Cardinal Barberini's being proclaimed the most splendid one—for these, of course, however costly, were definitely pieces of ephemeral architecture. Though it must have been stupendous—on Campo de' Fiori an altar had been erected that was a copy of the baldachin in St. Peter's—it is not clear why Gigli did single it out. Unless, that is, we

¹²⁶ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 135, 138, 166, 194.

¹²⁷ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 321.

¹²⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 146/150; other examples: 171/172.

assume he knew of the Pope's predilection for the Madonna which, actually, was shown on this occasion, too, as for an entire week sermons were held in San Lorenzo in Damaso—the very public 'private' chapel of Cardinal Barberini in his official residence, the *Palazzo della Cancelleria*—on Urban's favourite theme, the Immaculate Conception.¹²⁹

Gigli obviously delighted in the pomp and circumstance that accompanied the powers of Rome. He seems to have understood their function on the symbolic level while at the same time he rejoiced in the sheer splendour of the many ceremonies that punctuated life in the *Urbs*. Thus, rather sarcastically but nevertheless in great detail he described the amount of effort and money spent by the newly-arrived ambassador of Spain to, obviously, impress the Pope and even convert him towards the Spanish position in European politics; when the arrogant ambassador, after his audience, yet was heard to remark that the pope he had met was not the obdurate person people had described to his master, all felt the situation was normalised again:¹³⁰ the Spanish had been taught a lesson, and papal power was secure. However, when the Spanish ambassador, about to present, as was his annual obligation, a white jennet in lieu of the fief of Sicily held from the Holy See by the kings of Spain, for unclear reasons refused to do so on the morning of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, as ordered by the Pope, and turned up the night before, Urban was adamant. Next morning, the animal, which had been handed over to some papal officials instead, was found dead, probably poisoned—or so people said.¹³¹ However, Gigli may well have been voicing some mild anti-Spanish feelings, here. He did so again when reporting on the occasion of the birth of an heir to the Spanish throne: the words he used to describe how the Spanish ambassador had ordered eighteen mules to trudge around town laden with silver vessels, before the same mules were used to carry loads of food to the prisons of Rome, seem to show a faintly deprecatory note.¹³²

Another time, when the emperor's brother came to visit Rome, and refused to stage a cavalcade because he had not been given permission

¹²⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 272/274.

¹³⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 146.

¹³¹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 137.

¹³² Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 180.

to take precedence over the members of the Sacred College, Gigli seems vaguely satisfied that, once more, papal power was vindicated.¹³³

Among the most dazzling processions staged during Urban's pontificate surely were the two solemn entries of the new French ambassador, the Duke of Crequi, in June 1633, if only because the ambassador's person was literally decked with diamonds, worth, it was said, some 300,000 scudi¹³⁴—a sum that would have built a major church. But the great round of festivities caused by the election of Ferdinand III of Austria as King of the Romans and, a month later, by his coronation elicited a long description as well.¹³⁵

Perhaps not surprisingly, the festivities that were part of Rome's own civic ritual never came in for criticism. Thus, the annual Carnival joust on Piazza Navona obviously pleased Gigli. The 1634-occasion, organized by the Pope's nephew, young Antonio Barberini, was particularly splendid: Gigli describes it in detail, even listing the 22 young noblemen, mostly of old Roman families, whose participation upheld the reputation of the Town.¹³⁶

A significant moment in the public celebration of papal power—that, in Gigli's somewhat rosy vision, always was meant to be seen as an example or, perhaps, even a result of Rome's power—was the festive annual tournament, the "Pallio", commemorating the 1599-conquest of the marquisate of Ferrara by the Papal States. In August 1631, by some feudal law the duchy of Urbino reverted to the Apostolic See. The Pope decided that the Carnival of 1632 would be celebrated not only with the customary "Pallio" for Ferrara, but with a new one for Urbino as well, though, in view of the miserable conditions prevailing all over Italy, festivities were not really in order.¹³⁷

These recurring ceremonies surrounding the power of the 'People of Rome'—studiously upheld, though by now more fictive than real—always elicited Gigli's pride-betraying descriptions. Still he did realize that he very well knew where the actual power lay, for example in telling how, in the annual senator's procession, behind various bodies of armed men who represented the "Soldati del Popolo Romano",

¹³³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 151.

¹³⁴ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 233/235; see also 237; 238, for another entry, this time of the Polish ambassador.

¹³⁵ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 291/292; 293. Cfr. chapter 4 of this book.

¹³⁶ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 246/248.

¹³⁷ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 219.

the senator *pro tempore* rode ‘surrounded by the papal Swiss Guard’.¹³⁸ Moreover, noting the many urban festivities that increasingly stressed the secular power of the Pope and his relatives, Gigli sometimes seems to lose his enthusiasm for all the grandeur, perhaps precisely because in many of these Urbans clearly was the embodiment of the very papacy that had usurped the ancient dignities of the ‘People of Rome’ of whom Gigli was, however minor, a representative.

Thus, it is not clear whether he believed Urban when, on the occasion of the *Possesso*—the formal acceptance by a new pope of his position as ‘King of the Romans’—he declared that he really did not want his people to spend so much money.¹³⁹ Certainly, on subsequent occasions the Pope never seems to have bothered about the cost of civic ceremony. Therefore, Gigli could and did give ample coverage to the sumptuous cavalcades that, in 1630, were staged to celebrate Taddeo Barberini’s nomination to the venerable office of prefect of Rome, on the death of the hereditary prefect, the last duke of Urbino.¹⁴⁰ However, he also positively jumped at the opportunity to indicate that many people felt disgusted by the papal decision, and, consequently, failed to show up at the festivities. Indeed, he recounts with evident glee the ceremonial struggles that ensued between the foreign ambassadors, who refused to let the newfangled prefect take precedence.¹⁴¹

Gigli again clearly deploras the obvious inroads made by the papal authorities into the former independence of Rome’s city council when, in 1634, the carriage in which the two conservators and the city prior travelled was held up, and the latter imprisoned for debt, a thing unheard of in former times. ‘To this end has come the Majesty of the Roman People’, he sighs, implying that precisely the admittance to the council of men who are willing to behave like creatures of the papacy is causing the downfall of that millennial institution, the “*Senatus PopulusQue Romanus*.”¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 175.

¹³⁹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 133.

¹⁴⁰ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 206/208.

¹⁴¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 209/210.

¹⁴² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 248.

Holy or unholy power?

Obviously, Gigli believed in the power of the Church, or rather of the Faith. When a six-year old Jewish girl decided to become a Christian and, despite the earnest warnings of the prelates of the ‘Congregation of the Catechumenes’ that she had better return to her parents, for three years persisted in her wish, he felt she was, indeed, saved.¹⁴³ Likewise, he accepted such an institution as the ‘Casa Santa’, the House of the Holy Family, at Loreto, as entirely genuine because its transfer to Italy—by angels—was a historical fact that had occurred during the pontificate of Boniface VIII.¹⁴⁴

Still, in a great many cases Gigli seems to have wondered what, exactly, was part of the divine power of the Church, how to decide whether a manifestation of power emanated from Heaven or Hell, was white or black magic. Did he believe the supernatural forces intervened in Man’s life, warning the world with their signs?

In December 1634, a fire started that in the end destroyed three shops and threatened the neighbouring houses. At that very time, a procession with the Holy Sacrament passed along the street, and the priest sprinkled the flames with Holy Water, which doused them a little. Soon, it started raining, and further disaster was averted.¹⁴⁵ Yet, while many did hail this as a miracle, Gigli himself does not seem to have known what to make of it. He also kept an open mind when reporting the story of a woman who, threatened by a burglar, asked for a few minutes to say an *Ave Maria* in front of an image of the Madonna; while the burglar prepared the rope which he was planning to use to hang her with, the stool on which he stood collapsed and the knife he held severely wounded him, enabling the woman to call for help and have her molester arrested.¹⁴⁶ In a case of suspected arson, that caused three women to be burned alive, Gigli wrote that the elder one was ‘not too honest a female’, as if to imply that, somehow, this made the situation less sad than otherwise would have been the case, also because, through God’s influence, the younger daughter of this woman escaped: she had asked to be allowed to stay with an aunt.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 224.

¹⁴⁴ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 299.

¹⁴⁵ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 254/255.

¹⁴⁶ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 268/269.

¹⁴⁷ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 170.

Yet he does not qualify what had happened: was it retribution and salvation, or sheer chance and luck? In December 1636, a person was sentenced to death because he had been accused of being the author of anti-government pamphlets. Marquis Manzolo Bentivoglio did not confess, but two witnesses testified against him, which was enough to have him beheaded. However, before being killed himself, one of the witnesses retracted. It was too late, but people did note that nearly all those somehow connected with the process soon died, too, of unnatural causes.¹⁴⁸ Again, Gigli does not give his own views of the matter.

Some ‘signs’, however, Gigli seems to have felt to be unequivocally supernatural. When a flash of lightning entered the Gesù-church and travelled all around it, going out through a side door and passing between the legs of a man just entering, he noted it without any critical comment.¹⁴⁹ Also when, all through August 1624, the heavens show complex conjunctions of the planets in the signs of Leo and Virgin, which Gigli describes as huge rays, like swords wielded in battle, he does not connect them to any natural force.¹⁵⁰

Moreover, Gigli may well have believed the heavenly powers could be consulted and their actions foretold. Thus, in confiding to his diary who of the cardinals and other prelates had asked the advice of astrologers, as he often does, he seems to imply they always were given predictions that actually came true.¹⁵¹ But when, in 1630, a number of widely influential astrologers and their collaborators who copied their prognostications for distribution were imprisoned, Gigli refrains from comment.¹⁵² For in this case who was to decide between white or black magic?

Often, however, it was not that difficult. Thus, Gigli unfailingly notes miracles, especially miraculous healings.¹⁵³ Sometimes, he does not bother to describe what actually happened, or was supposed to have happened, nor does he disclose his own views in the matter.¹⁵⁴ Sometimes, he seems to hesitate between simply accepting what happened, and putting his trust in the words of others. In June 1643, a

¹⁴⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 286.

¹⁴⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 192.

¹⁵⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 138.

¹⁵¹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 132.

¹⁵² Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 195.

¹⁵³ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 189 and *passim*.

¹⁵⁴ E.g. Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 133, the case of the “Madonna della Riccia”.

three-year old girl was brought to Rome who had been born with the sign of the Cross imprinted on her alveolar ridge and, through it, could make any liquid produced by her mouth into a healing substance. Gigli just tells his diary that the girl's father had with him many signed attestations.¹⁵⁵

Occasionally, Gigli goes out of his way to relate what actually occurred. Once, a poor boy started receiving visions of the Virgin and, though he was told to attend to his job, continued to return to the place where She had appeared to him first, the gate to a vineyard in Trastevere. Soon, word got around, and many people congregated there, and were being miraculously healed of all kinds of infirmities and even liberated of the Devil. After a few days, the vision of the Madonna, which now somehow had materialized, was transferred to the basilica of Sta Maria in Trastevere and even given a special altar, there, where yet greater multitudes came to view and revere the picture.¹⁵⁶

Another time, during the procession of the Madonna of the Rosary, in October 1625, a heavy cart ran down a monk who normally would have died of his wounds. However—Gigli writes: 'I cannot pass in silence over a manifest miracle'—when the cart had passed, the monk, who had recommended his soul to the Madonna, arose and, after three days in bed, went about his business as usual.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, the Madonna held great power over the Romans, not least over Gigli himself. After her image miraculously appeared in fresco on a wall in a vineyard outside Porta del Popolo, he delves into the story as well, though he precedes his tale with a 'people say that it went as follows'. The image was consequently transferred to the monastery adjacent to the church of Sta Maria del Popolo.¹⁵⁸

Nevertheless, the Roman authorities were not always keen on having these miracles do their work. When, in 1633, yet another image of the Madonna began attracting numerous people because of its supposed miraculous properties, the Pope's representative had the church closed.¹⁵⁹ Also, the religious establishment seems to have been quite circumspect in qualifying as miracles the numerous other cases people were eager to so interpret.

¹⁵⁵ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 394.

¹⁵⁶ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 135/137.

¹⁵⁷ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 150.

¹⁵⁸ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 167/168.

¹⁵⁹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 236.

Thus, in 1637, a nun, who had not professed yet, because she had fallen ill and, for years, could not move a single limb, started having visions of the Virgin who told her she would be healed if only she founded a new monastery devoted to the constant contemplation of Christ suffering at the Cross. To be convinced of her mission's blessing, the nun simply should enter her monastery's church and ask for her non-functioning limbs to be rubbed with the sacred oil. After some arguing, the woman was indeed allowed to do so and, lo and behold, her legs and one of her arms regained their function but for the other arm that, according to the Virgin, she would have to use to don the habit of the new community she was to found. At that point of the story, Gigli went on to give a, for him, unique comment: 'The Order's superiors have instigated an enquiry, and found the miracle to be true. But as to the visions it is difficult to certify they are indeed given by God; such visions cannot be said to be true if the Apostolic See has not approved them'.¹⁶⁰

In short, the power to verify and hence legitimate the manifestations of the supernatural is, indeed, the Pope's, as the embodiment of the Church. When a son of the king of Poland visits Rome, the Pope makes him a canon of St Peter's. This honour, writes Gigli, gives the Polish prince the right to take the *Sudarium*, the sweat cloth of St. Veronica with Jesus' face imprinted on it, in his hands and show it to the people. Obviously, Gigli felt that this action represented the manipulation of the sacred, of holiness—both on the Pope's part, who could bestow this gift to a mere mortal, and, subsequently, on the part of this man himself.¹⁶¹

Indeed, Gigli often seems to have reasoned that the involvement of the Pope or his near relatives in such cases served as proof that everything was above doubt, as in the case of the Capuchin monk who had died at the venerable age of 94 years, and whose corpse then was said to be the cause of many miracles;¹⁶² a few years later, in 1631, Urban and his Capuchin brother Antonio having completed the building of the church of the Immaculate Conception on the present Via Veneto,¹⁶³ the bones of this Fra Francesco were among the many thousands that, in three hundred cartloads, were solemnly transferred to this new seat of the Capuchin Order. In another case, in 1634,

¹⁶⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 289/290.

¹⁶¹ Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 139.

¹⁶² Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 159.

¹⁶³ Gigli, *Diario*, *a.c.*, 159/160; 206.

the remains of a second-century martyr, Saint Martina, and two other blood witnesses were discovered under the altar of the church dedicated to her. Saint Martina's head was fully intact and, what was more, her heart, still 'sanguineous and tender', was preserved in a glass vase filled with white fat. Many people came to venerate the relics, including Pope Urban himself with a suite of twelve cardinals.¹⁶⁴ A few months later, the bodies were re-interred in their original place, and Cardinal Barberini decided to rebuild the entire church.¹⁶⁵

The discovery of the body of Saint Francesca Romana, in April 1638, also brought about miracles: when the Pope's representative put the Saint's arm between the arms of a nun who had been unable to use her own for many years because her nerves had been cut in an accident, she immediately opened her hands. Also, a blind man regained his vision, people possessed by the Devil were liberated from evil spirits and many sick persons were healed.¹⁶⁶ The following day, the same nun, now being touched with the Saint's legs, was able to walk about church to the utter stupefaction of all present. Many other miracles subsequently occurred.

Once again when, in 1639, a Franciscan monk died aged 106, of which he had spent 90 years in his monastery, he was immediately reputed to be a saint. His corpse was shown to the public, who arrived in great numbers to venerate him. Not only did it work many miracles, also, rigor mortis did not set in and when the papal physician arrived to experiment on it, it continued to bleed as if still alive. Even after the monk's body finally had been interred, his tomb was repeatedly opened and, always, his body gave off the smell of violets. Many people were freed of demons when brought to his grave.¹⁶⁷

The ageing of power

From 1641, onwards, Gigli must have felt that a long period was, slowly, drawing to a close. Ever more often he noted the Pope was unable to attend the functions at which he normally was present.¹⁶⁸ Yet he himself

¹⁶⁴ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 254.

¹⁶⁵ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 265.

¹⁶⁶ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 309/310.

¹⁶⁷ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 322.

¹⁶⁸ Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, 339/340: February, 1641; March 1641; April 1641; May 1641.

probably had his first audience ever with Urban precisely in these years. For in September 1641, the ‘People of Rome’ decided to offer the Pope, as of their own will, to pay for 3000 soldiers in case the imminent war over the duchy of Castro with Odoardo Farnese, duke of Parma, finally broke out. With (the risk of) hindsight, Gigli’s description of the moving scene during which the senior conservator pledged the People’s support to the Pope seems a first-class piece of satire. The Pope is reduced to tears and commands the kneeling town representatives to rise while he harangues them on the need to punish a disobedient vassal of the Church.¹⁶⁹

Soon afterwards, Urban created the huge number of thirteen cardinals,¹⁷⁰ to fill the vacancies that had been falling during the previous years. Obviously, he needed to restore the Sacred College to its full capacity of 70 members, if only because cardinals were needed to head the various offices of Church and state. Also, he must have felt he might need the support of as big a group as possible now that war had, indeed, begun. Finally, he may have sensed that his end was near and that the number of electors should be brought up to par, if only, perhaps, to ensure, through selecting his own men, the continuation of his policies.

Meanwhile, the very fact that papal government had to cope with the war against Parma, coupled, one must assume, to the fact that the Pope himself was less able to control things, made life in Rome decidedly more dangerous. Tales about soldiers ready to kill at any moment, and a group of “Borgognoni”, Spanish subjects rumoured to have conspired to set fire to all the hay lofts in town, to be able to sack it in the ensuing panic, now dominate the diary.¹⁷¹ In this climate, Gigli was inclined to believe the earlier predictions of a Franciscan monk, Bartholomeo da Saluthio, that bode ill for Rome’s future, the more so since the monk had argued that things would turn for the bad when men and women would start dressing in the same manner. That was precisely what Gigli noticed wherever he turned, now: ‘God deliver us from all evil’, he sighed.¹⁷² In September 1642, people really start panicking, many deciding to leave Rome, among them a considerable

¹⁶⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 342/343.

¹⁷⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 345.

¹⁷¹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 352/356.

¹⁷² Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 357.

number of nuns¹⁷³ who, apparently, feel they will be among the first to suffer at the hands of the brutes that soldiers are. Inevitably, there is a run on the banks, and people start hiding their valuables.¹⁷⁴

Meanwhile, the Duke of Parma's armies are marching on Rome, and the papal troops do not give them battle because the Pope is supposed to have ordered that no blood shall flow.¹⁷⁵ But then the Parmesan army sidesteps into Tuscany. Gigli gives no reason, but obviously it's because winter has set in. With a sigh of relief, Rome realizes it has, for the time being at least, escaped almost certain destruction. Those papal soldiers who have families are allowed to return home, to help sow the fields.¹⁷⁶

But in spring 1643, the campaign starts again,¹⁷⁷ and, worse, the Tuscans and the Venetians now join Parma, seeing their chance to have past wrongs, real or imagined, revenged. Also, the troops quartered in Rome get more unwieldy every day.¹⁷⁸ An avalanche of edicts aggravates the lives of the Roman people. Thus, they have to turn in all their silverwork, and are given government bonds in recompense—nearly worthless pieces of paper, Gigli implies.¹⁷⁹ Criticism of government policy is increasingly openly voiced, fomented also by the Florentine community in Rome, who are outraged because the Pope has excommunicated their city for joining the league against him.¹⁸⁰ People grumble the more as taxes are raised almost every day, with the so-called approval of the People of Rome, though in reality everything is ordered from the Vatican, Gigli rather bitterly notes.¹⁸¹

From the beginning of the year 1644, everyone in Rome knew the Pope, now aged 77, to be dying, and the conservators already decided to close the hall on the Campidoglio where Urban's statue had been placed, for fear of future troubles.¹⁸² Though in May a peace treaty was finally signed,¹⁸³ yet new taxes were being introduced all the time, with everybody realizing that it was the Barberini family, and, more

¹⁷³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 362.

¹⁷⁴ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 369; 363.

¹⁷⁵ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 370.

¹⁷⁶ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 370/371.

¹⁷⁷ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 388.

¹⁷⁸ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 391.

¹⁷⁹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 392, 398.

¹⁸⁰ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 397; 411.

¹⁸¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 399; 401/402.

¹⁸² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 411/413.

¹⁸³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 417.

specifically, Cardinal Francesco who now ordered them. Consequently, the Cardinal-*Padrone* was jeered at whenever he went about town.¹⁸⁴

On the 28th of July, Pope Urban VIII finally died. The Romans were both overjoyed, and enraged. As the gentlemen of the City Council had feared, they could barely prevent the populace from venting their fury on the Pope's statue. When the papal body was exposed in St Peter's, it was said to give off an evil smell. Yet numerous people came to see it, and terrible scenes ensued, with a number of persons being killed.¹⁸⁵

When Gigli sat down to evaluate Urban's 'performance' as a pope, he judged his first fourteen or fifteen years to have been very good ones indeed, noting that if this learned man, this patron of the arts had died at that time, he would have been counted among the best popes, ever. However, during the second period, when he had been increasingly ill, he had left power in the hands of his nephews. Already, they had amassed incredible riches and now continued to do so, burdening the people with a multitude of taxes, and allowing relations with foreign powers to deteriorate.¹⁸⁶ Thus, what later turned out to be the longest pontificate of the 17th century ended on a sad note.

Yet, on more mature reflection, Gigli felt that the more extreme anti-Barberini manifestations were, perhaps, a trifle unjust and uncalled for, the more so as they originated with men who had every reason to be grateful to the deceased pope and, indeed, to his family, who now fled the town.¹⁸⁷

Meanwhile, a long, eventful conclave had followed, full of haggling and intrigue. When a new pope finally was elected, Gigli noted that the people of Rome were little satisfied, as Cardinal Benedetto Pamfilj was known for a severe man who, also, 'was not very open-handed.'¹⁸⁸ In view of the judgement passed on the spendthrift Barberini, one may wonder whether Gigli was being ironic.

¹⁸⁴ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 424.

¹⁸⁵ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 426/427.

¹⁸⁶ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 425.

¹⁸⁷ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 429.

¹⁸⁸ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 431.

Conclusion

Giacinto Gigli provides a sound antidote to a vision of Rome that is, obviously, one-sided, created as much by the romantic, ruin-filled images of the town of the late 18th and early 19th century as by the many scholarly studies that have been written since the early 20th century, and that concentrated, mostly, on high art and high politics.¹⁸⁹ Judged on the basis of his diary, Gigli seems to have cared little for all those materializations of high culture that we have come to associate with Baroque Rome. The great feats of the arts, of science and of scholarship, whether they be the works of Pietro da Cortona, Galileo Galilei or Athanasius Kircher failed to catch his attention. Indeed, the only references to these fields of culture concern music, which Gigli often mentions though, as was usual at that time, he mostly fails to note the composer's name.¹⁹⁰

Though it is difficult not to read too much into a text that, albeit a private one, shows less emotions than we might nowadays expect, it seems safe to say that what Gigli was interested in most was, indeed, power, in all its manifestations. Quantitatively speaking, more than a third of his entire diary is made up of notes precisely describing the most visual expressions of power: the sumptuous religious processions celebrating the ideas of the Church, the complex cavalcades representing the views of temporal government, and, perhaps surprisingly, the actions and the final, highly 'visual' undoing of those who claimed a power that, though it was 'unauthorised', i.e. not held by either temporal or spiritual authorities, yet were thought to be able to wield it effectively: the prognostications and the public executions of astrologers, conjurers, necromancers and their like.

Rather than ascribing the power behind all these manifestations and expressed in them to the person of an individual pope, or his relatives, or to the representatives of the various European princes, the members of the religious Orders or even to those men and women who claimed contact with the supernatural, Gigli seems to have admired and respected power as part of the essence of life in his town. It was Rome itself, where daily ritual helped to keep that power intact, that

¹⁸⁹ Cfr. Rietbergen, *De retoriek*, *o.c.*, passim.

¹⁹⁰ Barberito, in his introduction to Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, lvii writes that Gigli does not write a single line about music, which makes one wonder about the way he has read the diary.

perhaps constituted the fundament of Gigli's 'worldview'. But at the same time, the power of the pope, the ruler both of Rome and of the entire Church, was an essential part of the power of the town, for it was to him that all the world came, kissing his feet in reverence for and acceptance of that power.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BARBERINI BUILD A CHAPEL, OR: RISING TO POWER IN POST-TRIDENTINE ROME

Introduction

November 29, 1604, was a busy day for Monsignore Maffeo Barberini, Clerk of the Apostolic Chamber. He was on the brink of leaving Rome to take up his new post as papal nuncio in Paris, a prestigious but also potentially dangerous position, as it brought him into the tumultuous limelight of European politics. However, it proved to be a decidedly advantageous step, eventually bringing him the cardinalate, which in turn paved his way to the papacy.

The day was a busy one because Maffeo Barberini had to sign a series of documents in connection with his own affairs, his family, their fortune and the construction of their new, Roman burial chapel.¹ Hence, it can be seen as the culmination of a process highlighting the phenomena of social mobility, artistic patronage and political power as the essential, inextricably connected elements of 17th-century Roman culture. This chapter aims to study the events leading up to that day and to read the documents to reveal their importance for a better understanding of the rise of the Barberini: a rise that culminated in the elevation of Maffeo Barberini to the throne of St. Peter, which enabled him to repay his family for their constant support of his career by placing them in the forefront of their world.

¹ Part of the story of the chapel has been told before, in: C. d'Onofrio, *Roma vista da Roma* (Rome 1967). However, neither his interpretation, nor the context in which he puts it fit the vision of Barberini power politics given in this study.

*From the periphery to the centre:
the vicissitudes of the Barberini from the 12th to the 16th century*

The medieval roots of “Casa Barberina” lay in Tuscany, or, to be more precise, in the little mountain town of Barberino,² where the family, according to its genealogical pretensions, used to belong to the local elite since time immemorial, though, according to more sober fact, they had been quite humble folk, possessing and diligently working a farm there.³ A 13th-century ancestor of the future pope left the rural seclusion of Val d’Elsa for the hectic life of Florence, the big city some 35 kilometres north of Barberino. There, in the capital of Tuscany, his sons prospered in the wool trade, of old the main source of the Republic’s wealth. Their descendants made careers for themselves in such fields as city government and papal finance, acting as ward-masters, magistrates and tax farmers or collectors.⁴

In the last quarter of the 15th century, one Francesco Barberini (1454–1530) established a silk drapery;⁵ soon, his commercial contacts extended all over Italy. Francesco’s sons by his wife, the Florentine patrician’s daughter Marietta Miniati—Carlo, Antonio, Maffeo, Nicolò and Taddeo, respectively—all entered the family firm, heading the branch offices in various Italian towns or acting as commercial travellers.⁶ The firm’s main office became the one founded by the eldest son, Carlo (1488–1566), in the great port of the Papal States, the town of Ancona on the coast of the Adriatic, one of Italy’s main windows upon the East. From there, Nicolò (1492–1574) travelled to Pera, the rich and exotic Italian emporium in Istanbul, to take care of the family’s growing interest in the lucrative Levant trade.

Apparently, the Barberini never forgot these origins. When, some hundred years later, Gianlorenzo Bernini was asked to provide a design for a huge fountain to adorn the gardens of the Barberini summer

² The documents in: *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV)*, *Archivio Barberini (AB)*, Indice I, nrs. 1–210 illustrate the medieval history of the Barberini family. There exists a factually thorough but not very interpretive family history: P. Pecchiai, *I Barberini* (Rome 1959) (= *Archivi d’Italia e Rassegna internazionale degli Archivi. Quaderni*, nr. 5).

³ *BAV*, *AB*, Indice I, nr. 77.

⁴ *BAV*, *AB*, Indice I, nrs. 52, 54, 58.

⁵ *BAV*, *AB*, Indice I, nr. 55. See also: P. Pecchiai, ‘Alcuni documenti mercantili della famiglia Barberini’ in: *Studi in Memoria di Mons. Angelo Mercati* (Milan 1956), 343–354.

⁶ *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. VI (Rome 1964), 164–165, article on Antonio, with data on Maffeo; 178–179, article on Nicolò. Raffaele’s business can be reconstructed from *BAV*, *AB*, Indice I, nrs. 131–139; Donato’s papers are in nrs. 125–130.

villa at Castel Gandolfo, it included the Arno and the Metauro, the rivers of Firenze and Ancona, which allegorically fed the Tiber, the river of Rome, where the family finally rose to its greatest power, and, conversely, the city that rose to its greatest visual splendour with the arrival of this family.⁷

As soon as Francesco (1528–1600), Carlo's son from his marriage to Marietta Rusticucci, came of age, the family council decided to take him into the firm. However, he was sent to Pisa first, to read for a law degree he obtained in 1552.⁸ He then left for Rome where his uncle Antonio (1494–1559), disgusted with the Medici tyranny in Florence, had settled in 1537 to oversee the Barberini business interests there, investing money in the grain trade, a profitable thing to do in view of the papal capital's fast-growing population. However, instead of concentrating on commerce, young Francesco entered the ranks of the papal bureaucracy, aided by his uncle—who in 1559 was murdered on the instigation of the Medici—and, probably, by Cardinal Rusticucci, a Florentine relative who had made a career in the Curia. Both gentlemen obviously knew the obligations of *pietas*, that sense of family that could always be reckoned upon if one needed support in one's career.

In 1553, Francesco, with money provided by his uncle Nicolò, who had gained considerable wealth in the Levant trade, bought the function of *abbreviatore*, actually something of a sinecure but nevertheless a firm step on the ladder of curial success.⁹ He then was appointed *prothonotarius apostolicus*, another position in the papal judiciary and, finally, after some very profitable speculations, he acquired the kind of wealth that enabled him to buy the expensive post of treasurer-general. This was easily the most lucrative of all offices in papal bureaucracy, since it was a key function in the world of international high finance, a world in which the papacy of the 16th century was deeply involved. Francesco now became a very rich man indeed, trading in papal state loans and obligations, and conducting all kind of monetary transactions on a grand scale, including lending money to such powerful but temporarily penurious families as the Farnese, a wise move for a man who wanted to further rise into the world.¹⁰ However, inevitably, his business

⁷ F. Petrucci, 'Disegni Berniniani per la Villa Barberini di Castel Gandolfo', in: *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae*, Vol. IV (Città del Vaticano 1990), 309–328.

⁸ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 140.

⁹ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 143. Cfr. Pecchiai, *o.c.*, 117.

¹⁰ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nrs. 140–178 contain the collected papers of Francesco; nrs. 152, 172 reflect his business interests. On Francesco's loans: nr. 143 bis.

dealings were such that, after his death, he had to be absolved of the fines that Canon Law imposed on clerics who indulged in trade and usurious practices.¹¹ Luckily, his heirs seemed to know how to oil the wheels of the papal Ministry of Finance, the 'Camera Apostolica'—of which Francesco had been, *ex officio*, the head. They succeeded in keeping the main part of the inheritance out of the claws of the Camera's always greedy officials.

Thus, in two generations, by a mechanism that, during the 16th and 17th centuries, operated all over Italy, a Florentine trading and banking family became part of the world of papal bureaucracy and finance, in short of the Curia. Arguably, this specific case is exemplary of developments that, together, mark an important stage in Italian history.

During the 15th and 16th centuries, the medieval, local autonomy of the Italian *commune* had had to give way to state formation on a regional level. From the erstwhile independent towns, now destined to become peripheral, many people moved to the regional centres, the fulcrums of economic, political and cultural life: Venice, Milan, Florence, Naples, Rome. The 16th century shows an even stronger concentration, whereby even the greater cities, though not, perhaps, subjected politically, still felt the cultural domination of that one great metropolis, Rome. Though Italy failed to become a political unity under papal dominance, Rome still was, in many fields, the centre, a magnet that with its countless possibilities of career, status and power attracted people from all walks of life and from all over the peninsula.

The Barberini were part of this process, going from Barberino to Florence, and from Florence to Rome, as had done the Capponi, the Medici, the Rucellai, the Sacchetti and many others¹²—they, too, unable to resist the attraction of the centre of Italy and of the Catholic world. In the case of the Barberini, the move to the centre was a move up the economic and social ladder as well. From poor farmers they became prosperous merchants and, finally, powerful bureaucrats, consciously or instinctively making the switch in the very period, 1580–1620, that saw the prospects of the Italian textile trade dwindle almost completely before the grave economic crisis of those years.¹³

¹¹ BAV, AB, Indice I, nr. 177.

¹² Cfr. M. Bullard, 'Mercatores Florentini Romanam Curiam Sequentes in the early 16th century', in: *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Vol. VI (1976).

¹³ R. Romano, *Tra due Crisi: l'Italia del Rinascimento* (Turin 1978).

A sense of family between Curial careers and social status

To Rome came, in 1584, young Maffeo Barberini (1568–1643), son of Antonio Barberini and Camilla Barbadori.¹⁴ While Maffeo's elder brother Carlo (1562–1630) became a partner in the family firm, a curial career for the younger boy must have seemed a lucrative investment, precisely because of the by now influential Roman contacts of the family. Already, these had enabled another brother, Giovanni Donato, to secure the position of treasurer of the richest province of the Papal States, the Romagna.¹⁵ And now Maffeo was going to be educated in his uncle's house, as Francesco had shown a decided interest in the scholarly progress of his nephew.¹⁶ Like most clerics, Francesco knew what was due to family *pietas*: it dictated that one shared with one's relatives the prosperity often, initially, gained through the support of those very relatives or even their forebears. Had not Francesco's own uncles provided the money to buy the offices that had made it possible for him to rise through the ranks of the Curia? Supporting young Maffeo, he now was repaying his debt to the family.

Two years after his arrival in Rome, Maffeo took the lower orders, receiving the tonsure. His uncle, obviously determined that his nephew follow in his footsteps, sent him to Pisa to study for a law degree.¹⁷ When Maffeo gained the doctorate in 1588, Francesco presented him with the office of *abbreviatore*, which he had bought for his nephew as his own uncle Nicolò had bought it for him 25 years ago. In 1589, Maffeo was appointed to the position of *Referendarius utriusque Segnaturae*, an important position in the papal judiciary and by now the necessary step to enter the higher ranks of the Curia. From that step onwards, protection continued to count, but to really rise, one had to show abilities as well, either in the administrative-political or in the scholarly-theological world. Maffeo began to make a name for himself, in both fields. He seems to have had a capable legal mind as well as having been a man who, through his interest in scholarship and literature, knew how to make friends within the leading cultural circles. Especially his gifts as a poet must have facilitated his entry into the learned

¹⁴ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nrs. 112, 116. On the Barbadori family: nrs. 80, 83, 94–124. On Maffeo: Pecchiai, *o.c.*, p. 136, sqq.

¹⁵ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nrs. 125–130.

¹⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 10.050, f. 2^r, a letter from Maffeo to his uncle on his progress.

¹⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 10.050, fols. 10–63, 103–146, 153–157, letters from Maffeo and from Professor Capponi, with whom he lodged in Pisa, to his uncle.

entourage of Pope Clement VIII Aldobrandini (1592–1605) and, later, of Paul V Borghese (1605–1621).

Soon, important Curial functions came his way. In 1592, the papal Minister of the Interior, Pietro cardinal Aldobrandini, Pope Clement's nephew, sent Maffeo to govern the town of Fano and its district. In 1593, Uncle Francesco petitioned the Pope for permission to transfer his own 'prothonotariat' to his nephew—a procedure not unusual, provided one paid the Camera a sizeable sum. In 1598, Maffeo was named Clerk of the Apostolic Chamber, i.e. member of the committee that ran the papal Ministry of Finance.

In that very year 1598, Francesco, who must have felt his 70 years, drew up his last will and testament.¹⁸ It was a significant text. From the monastery adjoining the church of Santa Maria della Pace, the aged prelate, invoking all his titles—Referendary of the two Signatures, Apostolic Prothonotary, Patrician of Florence—declared that he wanted to ensure the future prosperity and dignity of the House of Barberini by creating an entail, that was to comprise not only his own fortune but also the inheritance of his brother Taddeo, who had died in Ancona in 1575. Taddeo had ordered that his fortune be administered by Francesco for his nephews, the sons of Antonio: Carlo, Alessandro, Nicolo, Giovanni Donato, Marc-Antonio and Maffeo. It was Francesco's wish that his youngest nephew now become the keeper of this combined wealth, using the entail to further the interests of the family. In return for a lump sum, his brothers were to relinquish their rights to the inheritance. Francesco, however, obviously afraid that even so the accumulated capital would not serve the intended purpose, disposed that these sums had to be invested either in papal state loans or in real estate. Revealing of contemporary custom is the treatment meted out to the as yet only priest of the family, Maffeo's brother Antonio, who was a Capuchin monk. He was given no monetary compensation at all. His brother Taddeo would not have condoned part of the family capital disappearing in the Church's coffers, Francesco writes concisely. Therefore, Antonio's part was added to the entail.¹⁹

Though Maffeo was the youngest of the six brothers, his status as a high-ranking prelate automatically made him the virtual head of

¹⁸ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 176, fols. 1^r–39^v.

¹⁹ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 171, fols. 25^r–v. Also nr. 200 for the execution of the other stipulations of Francesco's will.

the family, much like Francesco had been given that honour by his brother Taddeo. He now had to take care of the unity and continuity of the family. Francesco's testament stresses the importance of this point. Maffeo was given the free disposition of the entire capital. Estimated at some 100,000 *scudi*, it was a considerable fortune indeed, but it had to be used to further the Barberini interests. It should not be divided, but had to be handed in its entirety to Maffeo's eldest son—the young prelate was not yet a priest—or to the first-born son of his eldest brother Carlo. Thus, the entail also became a primogeniture that, transferred from generation to generation, should guarantee the continued power and position of the Barberini.²⁰

The testament contained one more interesting disposition. Francesco demanded that a capital of 4000 *scudi* should be set aside, to yield an annual interest of 260 *scudi*. These were to be used to finance the construction of a family chapel in a Roman church. The chapel should be dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. In it, each day a mass should be read for the salvation of Francesco's immortal soul. As an alternative, annually two orphan girls, preferably of Florentine descent, should be given a dowry sufficient to enable them either to enter a nunnery or to find a decent husband. Given the fact that the number of Florentines living in Rome was large indeed, and that they certainly were not all wealthy bankers or merchants, it would not have been difficult to comply with this last request. If this option was chosen, the holder of the entail would have the right to select the girls and present them with this gift, during a ceremony in the church of San Giovanni Decollato, one of the churches especially dear to the Florentine 'nation'. Significantly, the ceremony should take place not on the feast of the Annunciation, as was customary in such cases, but on the feast of the Assumption. Whichever alternative was preferred, the capital that was to furnish the money for these pious purposes should be invested in papal state loans, too.²¹

Two years after he had signed his last testament, Monsignore Francesco Barberini died. Yet, though the will was opened, for the moment nothing happened. However, in winter 1604, just before he leaves for Paris, Maffeo Barberini has his own will drawn up. Besides smaller legacies for his mother and brothers, and a clause stating that the usufruct of his possessions will be his and his alone during his lifetime,

²⁰ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 171, f. 9^r.

²¹ *Ibidem*, f. 11^v sqq.

the testament once more confirms the existence of an entail comprising the entire accumulated Barberini fortune. Now, there was no question of a son of Maffeo's being the heir. For Maffeo's rise in the Curia had brought him from the lower to the higher orders and, thus, to at least formal celibacy: in view of his new function of nuncio, Maffeo had been rather hastily ordained into the priesthood—on October 20—and, two days later, been given the archbishopric of Nazareth. As this see was *in partibus infidelium*, Monsignore Barberini was not expected to reside there, as now was normal according to the rules imposed by the Council of Trent. The function was a purely titular one, meant to give him a rank commensurate with his position as the pope's ambassador at one of Europe's most powerful courts.

In consequence of all this, Maffeo's eldest brother Carlo and his first-born son were designated as heirs to the accumulated Barberini fortune.²²

On November 29, 1604, with the date of his departure set for December 1, Maffeo decided finally to comply with his uncle's last wish. In implementing Francesco's will, he did not opt for the orphan girl-alternative. Nor was this to be expected, given his character and obvious ambitions. He, really a "homo novus" in Roman society, in the power structure of the town that claimed to be the "Caput Mundi", decided to build a chapel, a choice that, if anything, pointed to considerations of status and to a sense of family, as well as to the satisfaction entailed by patronage of the arts, in the public space of a church.

The aesthetic and psychological gratification implied in the act of patronage were important indeed, not only because the protection of artists procured status in itself and gave one a feeling of power, but also because the young monsignore was a real lover of the arts, who cared passionately for poetry and for beauty in all its other forms. Moreover, Maffeo's choice satisfied a sense of family not only because he complied with his uncle's wish but also, I think, because the 'Roman' Barberini now could both state their arrival in the 'Urbs' and emulate their kin who, in Florence, vaunted their chapel in the church of Santa Croce.²³ The position of the Roman branch—newcomers to the Eternal City, suddenly risen to some power through service to and favour of the popes—now could be made manifest. But status also

²² *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 178, fols. 1^r–20^v; especially fols. 1^r–2^r and 16^r.

²³ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 85.

was served because a family chapel, together with a family palace were considered the most flamboyant manifestations of social arrival in any city. Precisely because he did not lack ambition, and knew that his and his family's ascent to power demanded certain forms of public representation, Monsignore Barberini, to underline his position as one of the up and coming men in the higher echelons of the Roman Curia, had indeed chosen to express the fact not only in the building of a family chapel but also in the acquisition of a family palace.

For in the same year 1604, the future nuncio, with his eldest brother, sister-in-law and their children, as well as with his mother and her brother Antonio Barbadori, had moved into a palace he had bought on the Via dei Gubbonari.²⁴ Carlo had resigned from his position in the family firm to come to Rome and spend the rest of his life taking care of his younger brother's business interests. Once more, the Barberini displayed characteristics typical of the Curial context. As in the previous generation, again the prelate-brother, even though, as in this case, the youngest, automatically assumed the dignity and function of 'head of the family'. The other family members now derived their status as well as, of course, a number of more material benefits from their relative's position.²⁵ Consequently, we find Carlo taking care of, among other things, the arrangements concerning the new family chapel.

While the new family palace served the Barberini's need to show their position in society, the new family chapel represented more complex aspirations, of power both secular and spiritual. The documents show the Cardinal now consciously aiming to rival the chapel being constructed, from 1601 onwards, by the reigning pope, Clement VIII. The Aldobrandini family chapel, in the ancient church of Sta Maria sopra Minerva, was a chapel that in its use of costly, multi-coloured marbles exemplified and continued a fashion the Barberini were now anxious to emulate. For Clement, too, had been following an example, the one first set in the 1570s by Gregory XIII in his family chapel, in new St. Peter's, and by Pope Sixtus V with his mausoleum in Sta Maria Maggiore, built between 1585 and 1589—the latter a chapel that, in the very years wherein Maffeo was actually having his Barberini Chapel

²⁴ The contracts for the chapel, of 1604, are signed: 'in the Palazzo Barberini, in the quartiere Arenula', or, else 'in Via dei Gubbonari'.

²⁵ For an analogous situation in the Borghese family, see: W. Reinhard, 'Ämterlaufbahn und Familienstatus. Der Aufstieg des Hauses Borghese', in: *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 53 (1974), 328–427.

constructed, also was emulated by the reigning pope, Paul V, who in 1606 had ordered work to start on what became the Capella Paolina in the same church of Sta Maria Maggiore.²⁶

Capella aedificatur

All this is not immediately manifest in the rather sober wording of a number of contracts and agreements signed by Maffeo on that memorable 29th of November. The documents involved, however, do illuminate some other important points. To start with, Barberini negotiated a deal with the treasurer of the community of Theatine Fathers of the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, right on Rome's main thoroughfare, the Via Papalis. It gave him the rights to the first chapel on the left side of the nave, to be used for and by the Barberini family without any monetary compensation. The chapel would be dedicated to 'the Assumption of the Glorious Virgin Mary'.²⁷

The first question that arises is: why did the Barberini choose this church? In the course of the 16th century, the Florentine nation, to which the family belonged, had started building itself a sumptuous church in Rome, San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, on the prestigious Via Giulia, one of the 'new' streets created a hundred years ago to substantiate the vision of a new Rome of that great Renaissance pope, Julius II. By 1580, the church's nave had been finished, and the leading members of the Florentine community had been given the opportunity by the confraternity who administered the church to acquire the rights to the ten chapels that had been created in the aisle, on the understanding that they would decorate them as befitting the church's general plan as envisaged upon completion—the transept, tribuna and cupola not having been finished, yet.²⁸ Thus, when the Barberini decided to build in 1604, Florentine families of old wealth occupied all existing space in San Giovanni with their chapels and chantries—the Sacchetti, for example, held their place in the transept from 1603 onwards; hence, for the time being there was no room for the architecturally expressed

²⁶ Cfr. for the Sistine and Paoline chapels: C. Pietrangeli, ed., *Sta Maria Maggiore* (Rome 1988), 225–231, and for the Aldobrandini chapel: G. Palmerio, G. Villetti, *Storia edilizia di S. Maria sopra Minerva* (Viella 1989), 154–156.

²⁷ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1565, a contract dated November 29, 1604. Also illuminating is the bundle of receipts and accounts, covering the years 1605–1607, in nr. 1566.

²⁸ See: H. Buchowiecki, *Handbuch der Kirchen Roms*, Vol. II (Vienna 1967), 95–96.

social ambitions of an upstart family. However, there may have been other reasons for Maffeo's choice of a different location as well.

The church of Sant'Andrea,²⁹ on the winding but ceremonially very important street that connected St. Peter's and its Vatican quarter with the old civic centre of Rome on and around the Capitol, had been founded to serve the monastery of the Theatines, who belonged to an Order that had been born from the ideals of the Catholic Reform movement. In 1582, the monks had been bequeathed the adjoining Piccolomini Palace, with the obligation, however, to build a new church and dedicate it to Saint Andrew, the patron of the Piccolomini family. To be able to do so, a small church dedicated to Saint Sebastian had to be torn down, but it was decided that the memory of this saint somehow would be preserved in the new church.

Though obediently starting construction, the monks were rather cruelly punished for their fervour when, in the 1580s, Pope Sixtus V decided to incorporate the tortuous Via Papalis in his grand design for the regulation of Rome's cityscape.³⁰ The new structure of Sant'Andrea had to be demolished. In 1591, however, building was resumed, with the church's facade now in line with the new street. However, in 1603, the monks ran out of money and construction ceased. Luckily, they found a new patron in Cardinal Alessandro Damasceni-Peretti, the late pope's nephew and former Secretary of State, and, if only therefore, one of Rome's richest men. Peretti, confronted with the unrivalled building mania of Pope Paul V, who from the beginning of his pontificate aimed to enlarge and finally finish new St. Peter's, decided to have new plans made for the construction of a church that would not have to blush when confronted with the Vatican basilica. Carlo Maderno (1556–1624), the architect, also, of the last building phase of St. Peter's, submitted a design for Sant'Andrea that was accepted. Existing structures were to be incorporated in it. Peretti vowed the gigantic sum of 160,000 gold *scudi* for the execution of this grandiose project.

It seems reasonable to suppose that a number of Florentine families, thwarted in their aspirations to raise their status and immortalize their

²⁹ For the following: H. Buchowiecki, *Handbuch der Kirchen Roms*, Vol. I (Vienna 1967), 349–365. More data in: A. Boni, *La Chiesa di San Andrea della Valle, nella sua storia e nei suoi monumenti* (Rome 1907); S. Ortolani, *San Andrea della Valle [= Le chiese di Roma illustrate]* (Rome 1923); H. Hibbard, 'The early history of Sant'Andrea della Valle', in: *The Art Bulletin*, 43 (1961), 289–318; and: C. Pericoli Ridolfini, 'Sant'Andrea della Valle' in: *Tesori d'Arte Christiana*, Vol. V (Rome 1968), 141–168. Cf. also: Pecchiai, *o.c.*, 142–143.

³⁰ On these projects see: J. Connors, *Borromini and the Roman oratory* (New York 1980).

names with a family chapel in San Giovanni, eagerly seized the possibility to now realize their dreams in a church that was the biggest to be built in their time, a church, moreover, that was not only near to the centre of Florentine power in Rome, the Via Giulia and the Via dei Banchi, but also had been first willed by the Piccolomini family, who were, originally, from Tuscany as well, besides having given the Church no less than two popes, whose monuments adorned the new church.³¹

Thus, the Strozzi family, the Roman branch of a Florentine banking dynasty, procured a chapel in Sant'Andrea, where subsequently five of its members were buried. The Ginetti, equally Florentine, spent some 30.000 *scudi* on a family chapel there. Nor did the Rucellai stay behind, they the Roman representatives of one of Florence's proudest governing and financial families—besides being business relations of the Barberini, as appears from Maffeo's monetary manipulations during his Parisian stay. Hence, the Barberini who, in the person of Monsignore Francesco and his nephew Maffeo, only recently had entered these exalted circles, cannot have missed seeing their chance as well.

The Theatine Fathers, for their part, must have been equally aware of the opportunity provided by the presence of these families striving for power and for the status that served both to keep and create it. Allowing men like Maffeo Barberini some space in the as yet empty shell of their vast new church, they were able to considerably reduce the enormous sums they otherwise would have had to spend on the internal decoration of this great temple, for which Peretti's bequest, however generous, simply did not suffice. For with the transfer of the chapel went the obligation for the Barberini and their like to finish it and, moreover, to do so in a way becoming the church as the Fathers envisaged it.

Some of the Theatines' wishes were not stated in writing, such as the silent assumption that the remains of the old church of Saint Sebastian, now incorporated in the thickness of the wall of the new church's façade, should somehow be accessible from the Barberini Chapel. And so they were, for through a small passage in the chapel's left wall one can still enter a niche in which the remnants of the old shrine have been retained.

However, some other of the Fathers' ideas definitely did enter the contract. Thus, the Barberini coat-of-arms, whereon the bees flew, was

³¹ Both Pius II and his nephew Pius III were from the little Tuscan town of Corsignano, subsequently renamed Pienza.

not to be affixed to the great arch separating the chapel from the nave: a blow to the family pride, of course, but a restriction put on all private patrons who built within the church, in order ‘not to violate the stipulations of those who had founded the church’—by contrast, in San Giovanni, most chapels proudly vaunt their origin precisely through the family coats of arms hung over the entrance arch.

The contract also stated that building should start at the latest three months after the document had been signed. Construction was to be finished within eight years. If Maffeo failed to meet this term, the concession of the chapel would revert to the Theatines, who then would be at liberty to grant it to another family, without any obligation on their part to reimburse the Barberini for expenses already incurred.³² Thus, in fruitful interaction between the relatively poor institutional patrons and the wealthy private ones, the Barberini Chapel and its likes were clearly planned as part of the church’s overall design; consequently, the greater part of the church’s interior was finished in 1614.³³

Moreover, the Fathers also knew quite well what they wanted the chapel to look like. The altar wall, viz. the wall facing the chapel’s opening arch towards the nave, should be divided by four pillars of ‘marmo mischio’, and also otherwise be covered with marble of different colours, specifically to match the design of, and at least equalling the quality used in the chapel willed by Orazio Rucellai—which, of course, is the next chapel from the Barberini one.³⁴

However, another stipulation is, perhaps, the most interesting one, shedding, as it does, an intriguing light on the change of mentality, both religious and, therefore, aesthetic, brought about by the spirit of Trent that was becoming manifest in Rome in the last decades of the 16th century. The Fathers explicitly stated that the chapel would not be adorned with ‘satyrs expressing or exciting lust, or indeed with any kind of figures or profane illustrations’—“figure laicali”—‘that would scandalize, or with worldly representations that might incite idolatry’.³⁵ The open pleasure the Renaissance had felt in using and recreating classical, pagan mythology had not been able to withstand the demands of the Catholic Reform Movement for a more morally severe use of artistic strategies within the context of religion.

³² The contract, as in note 25, fols. 1^v–2^r.

³³ Buchowiecki, *o.c.*, *ibidem*.

³⁴ The contract, as in note 25, f. 2^r.

³⁵ The contract, as in note 25, f. 2^r.

In Maffeo Barberini, the Theatine Fathers had found a client whose views on the relationship between art and religion easily matched their own. In one of his poems, he mentioned the problem, specifically telling his readers references to pagan art in modern texts and, one may assume, other artistic manifestations, were acceptable only if denoting negative meanings. As much as other considerations, the very fact of this congruence of opinions may have led the new nuncio to link his family chapel with the ideals of the Tridentine Theatines.

Also on November 29, Maffeo signed a contract with Domenico Passignano (1559–1638), a painter whom, not surprisingly, can be unmasked as one of the many Florentine masters who had sought employment and fame in Rome. Passignano, whose family name was Cresti, had aided his teacher Zuccari with the decoration of the cupola of the Florentine *duomo*, and subsequently followed his master to Rome in 1579. Among other jobs he undertook some work in the Mancini-chapel of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini. After extensive travelling, he returned to the *Urbs* in 1602, to remain there till his death in 1638. He is considered one of the painters who renewed the so-called Florentine School, turning their back on Vasari's manner by introducing a more forceful composition and stronger colours, with obvious Mannerist overtones.³⁶

The contract is quite outspoken in wording the patron's wishes and, as such, rather more explicit than the standard texts normally establishing the patron-painter relation, detailed though these, too, often were.³⁷ Obviously to comply with Uncle Francesco's wishes, the chapel's decoration, as entrusted to Passignano in its entirety, was to reflect the theme of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The very moment itself had to be depicted in the altarpiece—"vi si deva dipingere l'Assuntione della gloriosissima Vergine".³⁸ The lateral pieces would, respectively, show the Visitation of Mary and Elisabeth—"nel quadro grande della facciata a man destra"—and the Birth of Christ—"nel quadro di contro"—, at 300 *scudi* a piece. The lunettes would be dedicated to the Virgin's birth—"la lunetta a man destra"—and, once again, her

³⁶ On Passignano: Thieme-Becker, *Künstlerlexicon*, Vol. 26, 285–286. Also the monographic study devoted to Passignano's life and work: J.L. Nissman, *Domenico Cresti, il Passignano, 1559–1638: a Tuscan painter in Florence and Rome* (Ph.D. Thesis Columbia University, New York 1979), especially 111–142.

³⁷ Cfr. F. Haskell, *Patrons and Painters. Art and Society in Baroque Italy* (London 1978) chapter I.

³⁸ The contract with Passignano, also dated November 29, 1604, is in: *BAV, AB, Indice II*, nr. 1565. For this quotation: f. 1^r.

Assumption—"la lunetta di contro". On the latter, pride of place was to be given to God the Father, enthroned between cherubim and seraphim, 'as in a vision of Paradise'. For the lunettes, Passignano would receive 150 *scudi*, each. The pendentives—the "quattro triangoli"—should show four prophets, to be specified by the Barberini at a later moment. Together, they were estimated at 150 *scudi*. If the Barberini desired the use of ultramarine—the most expensive colour—, they were to supply the painter with this material on their own account.

The entire pictorial decoration, including the scaffolding on which Passignano was to work and the application of the stucco that would carry the frescoes—to apply these, Passignano was asked to use line-seed oil of the finest, imported quality—had to be realized for the sum of 2250 *scudi*. The painter would be given 200 *scudi* in advance, and the rest as work proceeded—which was customary in almost all such contracts. He was to start on his job in 1605, and was given three years to finish it. However, before the first stroke of his brush, Passignano should show his designs to Maffeo or his representative, his brother Carlo: sign of an involvement that actually was no less customary.

On the same November 29, Maffeo contracted with two master masons, Bartolomeo Bassi and Domenico Marchetti, revealing that the idea of the chapel was not a spur-of-the-moment whim but had been on his mind for quite some time already.³⁹ For the first paragraph of the document records that the archbishop, in view of this construction, has ordered the construction firm of Francesco Rossi and Matteo da Castello to carefully select various marbles in the Dolomite mountains beyond Trent and Verona. Now, the masons are given a minutely specified list of these marbles already in Barberini's possession; the collection built up over the past years, is to be used for the various elements that will clothe the chapel's structure: the pavement, the two steps leading to the altar, the yellow marble pilasters that will line the walls, the wall-coverings around the frescoes, the columns of *verde antico*, and the cornice, as well as some of its 'structural' furnishings: the pedestals of the statues that will be placed there, and the altar itself. For each item, the marble is specified as to colour and quality, with indications, also, of those places where incrustation with even more

³⁹ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1566, accounts 1605–1607.

costly, semi-precious stones are foreseen: alabaster, agate, jasper, rock crystal and lapis lazuli, that, too, had been bought all over Europe with this grand project in mind.⁴⁰

The contract allowed Barberini every opportunity to reconsider the actual use of all this material if he felt inclined to modify either the chapel's design or the details of its execution. The job would be done on the site itself, with the Theatines providing space for storage et cetera. Accounts would be settled each Saturday, on the basis of receipts, with the remainder being paid on execution.

The accounts that have been preserved show that the first deliveries of marble started in 1605, from the quarries of one Matteo Pellegrini. After the cart loads had been delivered in Rome, and customs' duties had been paid, the sculptors and polishers took over: the contract stipulated for all un-worked marble surfaces to be made as lustrous as possible.

All this clearly shows Maffeo's plan for a chapel to date from, probably, the opening of his uncle's will, the more so since, of course, contracts with painters and sculptors could only have been profitably concluded if and when the architecture of the chapel itself had been decided upon already.

Those art historians who have given some attention to the Barberini Chapel, assume the contractor Matteo di Giovanni, from Città di Castello, to have been the architect. There is no contract to corroborate this statement. Yet, there are some other indications. From 1605 onwards, building and sculpting actually started. From letters preserved in the Barberini Archives it appears that when conflicts arose over the design and its execution with the master masons, Matteo had the last word, as supervising contractor. Also, it was he who regularly applied to Barberini in Paris, asking for instructions or voicing complaints.⁴¹ Moreover, a letter written by Maffeo to one of the sculptors in Autumn 1605 shows that he did indeed plan to make some changes to the original design, even though this affected the original budget as well.⁴²

⁴⁰ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1566, receipts for the agate, jasper and lapis lazuli from Corsica, Sicily and Tuscany, and the amethysts from Bohemia, as well as a list dated February 12, 1613.

⁴¹ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, mazzo 23, undated letters by Castello, and Indice II, nr. 1565, the contract with the contractors, November 29, 1604.

⁴² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 10.091, correspondence of Maffeo while in Paris. On f. 52^r, Maffeo to Marchetti, 9 November 1605.

However, financial considerations probably did not bother Maffeo overmuch. Never, during his Parisian years, did the archbishop forget to attend to his private business interests. Indeed, he maintained a voluminous correspondence with his brother Carlo and his maternal uncle Antonio, mainly dealing with commercial affairs and the legal problems connected with them.⁴³ Moreover, the position of a papal nuncio was a very profitable one for someone who knew how to use it properly. True, the costs of keeping up rank and position were considerable, and the stipend provided by the papal Camera so paltry that one had to dig deep into one's own pockets to be able to meet them. However, the revenues generated by the law court attached to the *nunziatura*, the numerous privileges of a legal or spiritual nature a papal nuncio could grant under the provisions of Canon Law in the way of dispensations, indulgences and the like, as well as the possibility of profiting from Rome's financial dealings with the ecclesiastical authorities of the state one was accredited with, all could serve to enrich a papal ambassador. Of Maffeo it was whispered that he amassed a fortune during his time in France.⁴⁴ With a man stemming from a long line of merchants and bankers this is not, perhaps, very surprising. Though not all contemporaries chose to follow a line of action as practised by Monsignore Barberini, still, his conduct was quite normal enough not to be morally reprehensible in his own time's terms.

Yet, even without his Parisian transactions, the archbishop could not exactly be called a poor prelate. His account books, kept in numerous heavy volumes in the family archives, show how a Church dignitary through the accumulation of Church offices could acquire a princely income. Yet, in Barberini's specific case, this even was superseded by his revenues from the family fortune.⁴⁵

From the archbishopric of Nazareth, for all its being a sinecure, Maffeo drew some 1200 *scudi* a year. To this were added some 2500 *scudi* from pensions granted to him by the pope on the strength of the revenues from a number of prosperous Italian sees: Arezzo, Chieti, Cremona. Then, in 1606, Pope Paul V sent his Parisian ambassador

⁴³ *Ibidem*, fols. 1^r–50^v.

⁴⁴ Pecchiai, *o.c.*, 142–143.

⁴⁵ The following data have been compiled on the basis of: *BAV, AB*, series *Computisteria*, Vol. 23, *Giornale delle Entrate Ecclesiastiche*, 1608–1615, fols. 1^r–47^r; it also registers the expenses paid on the basis of Barberini's ecclesiastical revenues, e.g. for the chapel.

the red hat.⁴⁶ As with all Italians elevated to the cardinalate, Barberini, too, was proclaimed a ‘poor cardinal’, which meant that he was paid an additional annual sum of 1300 *scudi* from the coffers of the Church. Also, of course, the cardinalate made Maffeo *de iure* head of the family, in its widest sense of cognate and agnate relationships: he now definitely was the visible symbol of Barberini power and pride.

Soon, Cardinal Barberini exchanged the see of Nazareth for the far more lucrative archbishopric of Spoleto, which paid some 2400 *scudi* a year. As cardinal-legate of Bologna, a major political-administrative function given him after his return from Paris, Maffeo not only exercised great power, Bologna being one of the wealthiest provinces of the Papal States, he also pocketed another 2400 *scudi* annually for the duration of his legation—three years. On his return to Rome, he was made president of one of the papal supreme courts, the *Segnatura*. The salary was commensurate: 1600 *scudi* a year. It is no surprise, then, to find the cardinal’s personal fortune in 1620 estimated at some 260.000 *scudi*, yielding an annual income of, at least, 30.000 *scudi*.⁴⁷ Obviously, Barberini had not failed to profitably invest his savings—in 1610 already some 11.000 *scudi*⁴⁸—though his expenses were huge, what with the court he kept to maintain his position and, of course, the money that went into such prestige-increasing building activities as the extension of the family palace and the construction and decoration of the new chapel.

Questions of iconography: the influence of Trent

At a moment when the architecture of the chapel had already been decided upon and the main lines of the interior decoration had been convened with the contractors, the final design for and execution of the decoration of the ceiling and the cupola still was being debated.

⁴⁶ Pecchiai, *o.c.*, 138. Cfr. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 10.091, f. 58^r, sqq., a letter of gratitude to Pope Paul, September 29, 1606, as well as many letters from all kinds of near and distant relatives rejoicing in Maffeo’s success, asking for help and support, et cetera.

⁴⁷ Data extracted from: *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 1056. Carlo Barberini, before he was given the family fortune on Maffeo’s ascension to the Papacy, was worth ca. 50.000 *scudi*.

⁴⁸ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 1055. Cfr. also: *BAV, BL*, Vol.10.066, f. 33, which describes the estate of Radicoli, bought by Maffeo on August 22, 1606.

Four alternatives were considered:⁴⁹ an entirely painted version, a combination of painting and gilded stucco, a stucco-cum-mosaics one, and a decoration with mosaics, only. The price tags attached to the various versions differed considerably: 600, 1000, 2100 and 3160 *scudi*, respectively. The fourth option could not but be the most expensive one for the simple reason that in order to realize the desired visual effect in the scenes represented in the cupola for a viewer deep down in the chapel's narrow, high space, a great number of tiny pieces of mosaic would have to be used.

Carlo Barberini, apparently a purse-proud man, decidedly rejected this last possibility, even after he had succeeded in reducing the asking price by some 800 *scudi* during negotiations with the mosaic makers or *vetrari*, from the appropriately-named firm of *Pomo d'Oro*. On the other hand, Father Marcello Pignatelli, the Theatines' business manager, objected that if money considerations were to be decisive, one should realize that the most inexpensive method, a stucco-only option, would look rather 'cheap'. He was joined by the architect, who argued that, if mosaics were too costly, frescoes had to be the alternative. Only of these two choices it could be said that they 'had elegant beauty and would delight everyone'.

When Passignano then came out strongly, though not, perhaps, surprisingly, in favour of a painted decoration, it was decided that way. Only the opening of the lantern would be surrounded with a stucco wreath, as had been used to great effect in the costly Aldobrandini Chapel recently finished for the memory of Clement VIII. For whereas the rich marbles and semi-precious stones served to create an impression of overwhelming wealth, the chapel's spiritual dimension should, of course, be realized in the iconography of its painted decoration. Some loose sheets preserved in the Barberini Archives attest to the fact that the patrons gave the question considerable thought. In view of what I now know of Maffeo's ethical and aesthetic ideas, his influence is easily discernible.

The sketches involved, with the accompanying verbal explications, are not signed and it is therefore impossible to attest their author with any certainty. It does not seem to have been Passignano himself. It is a well-known fact that painters normally worked almost completely on commission, which meant they even were given detailed instruction as to the scenes and figures that should be depicted, and the imagery that

⁴⁹ The following is based on a series of sketches and appended documents in: *BAV, AB, Indice II, nr. 1566*.

should be, implicitly or explicitly, expressed. Nor should we assume the majority of artists to have been highly literate, even learned men.

Yet, this aspect of patronage has been much debated. For it is also quite obvious that such instructions seldom were the outcome of learned, theological and aesthetic considerations on the part of the patron who paid for the work. Generally speaking, the patron would indicate the grand lines, only, perhaps stressing the need to accentuate certain elements. Depending on the importance of the commission, he or she might then employ a more expert adviser to draw up a detailed program. I think the latter was the case even where such an indisputably learned patron as Maffeo Barberini was concerned.

Passignano, at least, must have been used to this kind of dependency. When, some twenty years later, after his early patron had become pope, he presumed on their former relationship by asking Carlo Barberini for a job in the on-going decoration of St. Peter's, he was given the commission of two of its altars, the altar of St. Thomas in the Old Choir, and the altar of the Presentation of the Virgin, in the homonymous chapel. Now, it was the basilica's then architect, Carlo Maderno, who supplied the themes, though he offered Passignano alternatives to choose from.⁵⁰

As Passignano's contract stipulated, the Barberini-chapel was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, a choice reflecting the Tridentine predilection for Christ's Mother as the most venerable and effective link between mankind and its Maker.

According to the wish of the chapel's virtual founder, Monsignore Francesco, Mary's Assumption was to be the focus of the chapel's decoration. However, the instructions given to Passignano rather accentuate Mary's Immaculate Conception and its consequences for her life as Christ's mother, as can be seen on the various frescoes he painted on the chapel's two lateral walls. The left wall's lunette directly refers to the Virgin's birth, with a servant extracting the child, instead of depicting, as was usual up to that time, the mother's purification after she had given birth: thus it contains the message Mary really had been without original sin.⁵¹ The lunette of the opposite wall shows the Annunciation.

⁵⁰ Cfr. the documents in: O. Pollak, *Die Kunsttätigkeit unter Urban VIII*, Vols. I-II (Vienna 1928), Vol. II, 69, 530.

⁵¹ On the issue: E.D. O'Connor, 'Immaculate Conception', in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VII, (New York 1967-1979). See also: H. Yrjö, *The Sacred Shrine. A Study of*

The main painting on the left wall depicts the Visitation, with the two women meeting in the midst of a few servants and neighbours. The main fresco on the right wall refers the spectator to the moment Mary brings her Child to the priest in the temple; Joseph is conspicuously absent.

This sequence of scenes in which Mary is the centre seems to express one of Maffeo Barberini's strongest theological beliefs. He proclaimed his love of the Virgin and the notion of her immaculate conception in various poems; he was to defend the idea all through his life and, after his election to the papacy, even considered codifying it as a Church dogma although, in the end, political prudence kept him from doing so.⁵² The concept of the 'immaculate conception' was much debated both within and without the Church of Rome because it affected the central debate about the force and working of God's grace. Critics denounced the concept because it bordered on a deification of the Virgin and, consequently, lessened the singular position of God himself. Yet its advocates held that she, of all humankind, was the only one to have received God's grace to its unique, fullest extent, a gift that was His to bestow, only. Thus, she had been truly 'Deiparae', Godlike. The strongest advocates of the tenet were to be found precisely in those religious Orders that sprang from the Catholic Reform, among them the Theatines in whose church Maffeo built his chapel and, of course, the Jesuits, who had been Maffeo's teachers.

The Marian devotion of the Society of Jesus, with its theological implications, was an important religious weapon, used to demonstrate the all-embracing force of God's grace. Of course, it also was the Church's main instrument in stressing the holy task of motherhood, the central, even if admittedly only meaningful female function it was willing to sanctify outside monastic vocation.

In view of the Jesuits' insistence on the position and role of Mary, I was not surprised to discover that a Jesuit priest, Father Bernardino Steffonio had been involved in the decorative program for this chapel, commissioned by one of the Jesuits' star pupils in a Theatine church. His presence in the scheme of things was appropriate indeed. In Rome, he was one of the advocates of a new rhetoric, employing suitable

the Poetry and Art of the Catholic Church (London 1912), as well as, of course: E. Male, *L'art religieux après le Concile de Trente* (Paris 1932), 30–40.

⁵² An illuminating survey of the issues involved, and Urban's attitude towards them, is in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4521.

pagan elements to achieve Christian aims. Though the Jesuits sought to infuse this synthesis in their verbal propaganda, as is shown in their manual ‘On preaching’, they also tried to reach their goal by visual means. Interestingly, Steffonio also was one of the Jesuits’ foremost dramatists, a prime force behind the theatre culture that had evolved in the *Collegio Romano*, Urban’s old school.⁵³ The Jesuit theatre was, of course, a Baroque fusion of pictures and poetry, of words and images; but the theatre also made use of gesticulation, of beseechingly-wrung hands, modestly turned shoulders and penitently hung heads, in short of the body language that was as effective on the stage as it was in the pulpit, and that could be encoded in painting as well.

But whereas on the stage Father Steffonio did not eschew the use of Classical themes re-read, so to say, to convey a Christian message in the process called “*amplificatio christiana*”, in the Barberini Chapel this strategy was apparently deemed unconvincing or inappropriate. On February 8, 1606, Father Bernardo addressed an extensive memorandum to Carlo Barberini, outlining his views⁵⁴ and supplying advice as to the iconographical details of the cupola’s paintings. He realized the patrons wanted something different, which would not follow tradition but would still express their veneration for the Virgin Mary. Though he took care to avoid the impression he was proposing new-fangled notions, he did suggest that instead of depicting scenes from the Virgin’s life the cupola’s frescoes should rather stress her essential virtues, the outcome of her unique status. These could be symbolically rendered through the presentation of the appropriate attributes and colours.

However, even though the Reverend Father wrote he was afraid to be accused of arrogance, on close inspection his proposal does not seem to warrant his fear as it is not all that original. It mainly follows the iconography codified by Cesare Ripa in his famous handbook, first published in 1593 and since used all through Catholic Europe.⁵⁵ A new Roman edition had appeared in 1603, and may well have inspired Father Steffonio, for the similarity between the forms, attributes and

⁵³ Cfr. M. Fumaroli, ‘Theatre, Humanisme et Contre-Réforme a Rome (1597–1642): l’oeuvre du P. Bernardo Steffonio et son influence’, in: *Bulletin de l’Association Guillaume Budé*, XXXIII (1974), 397–412.

⁵⁴ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1566.

⁵⁵ C. Ripa, *Iconologia* (Rome 1593, 1603). I consulted the edition Siena 1613. Cfr. also: C. Ripa, *Iconologia of Uytbeeldinghe des Verstands* (Amsterdam 1644) which was re-issued: Soest 1971. On Ripa: the introduction by J. Becker to the Soest re-issue, I–XXIII, as well as: E. Mandosky, *Untersuchungen zur Iconologie des Cesare Ripa* (Hamburg 1934).

colours he proposed and the ones suggested by Ripa is striking indeed. Nevertheless, the ideas were still recent enough to impress the visitor of the Barberini Chapel as unconventional, as daring, even. Or, as a description of the program for the cupola, preserved in the Barberini Archives, puts it: ‘one now may see in which singular and new way the said virtues have been symbolised’

What did a spectator see?⁵⁶ Humility is shown standing on a marble pedestal in a green meadow strewn with flowers, her steadfastness accentuated by her paraphernalia. She is a young girl, clad in blue, her bosom girt with a silver-and-gold cincture. Sunk in thought, she presses a dove carrying an olive branch to her breast, her feet resting on a globe.⁵⁷ As Father Steffonio writes, there is a sure theological basis for all this imagery. Virginité, a majestic but pallid maiden, has her eyes cast to Heaven. Her head is crowned with a wreath of stars. She is dressed in white, and carries a lily in the one, and a burning lamp in the other hand. A lamb and some flowers rest at her feet.⁵⁸ Faith walks in blue and gold, holding the Book of the Apocalypse with its seven seals in her hand. The key hangs from her wrist. A gigantic eagle unfurls his wings behind her.⁵⁹ Charity spreads her cloak to cover the entire world. Her head is crowned with a flame, her other attributes are a lily, a dove and a pomegranate. She holds the Psalter and an ivory baton. Her breast is pierced by a sunbeam, and she stands in a fiery chariot that wings her up to Heaven, where on an altar a sacrifice burns.⁶⁰ Above each of these virtues, a cameo holds the animal that is special to them: Humility has a lamb, Virginité a unicorn, Faith an eagle and Charity a pelican that pierces its own breast to feed its offspring.

Perhaps rather later than is commonly assumed, the cupola’s pendentives came to be filled with four Old Testament figures dear to Barberini as well. David is there with his harp—the poet-prophet who became king of Israel as, finally, Maffeo, himself a poet who wanted to be a prophet, became priest-king, of the Church and the Papal States; Solomon, the wise, who built the temple, as Maffeo, who completed St Peter’s; Moses, who gave his people the law, as Maffeo felt he had to do, and, in many ways, did, both as a poet and as the Church’s lawgiver.

⁵⁶ *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 4729, fols. 635^r–638^r contain a description anno 1616.

⁵⁷ Ripa 1613, *o.c.*, I, pp. 356–358.

⁵⁸ Ripa 1613, *o.c.*, I, p. 351.

⁵⁹ Ripa 1613, *o.c.*, I, pp. 230–233.

⁶⁰ Ripa 1613, *o.c.*, I, pp. 99–101.

And finally Isaiah, brooding over his people's inconsistency and their tendency to forget God's rules—a theme dear to Maffeo, who often felt his poetic sayings, his prophecies, went unheeded. It seems as if these four painted representations belong to the period of Maffeo's pontificate, rather than to a previous time of his life

Meanwhile, all the other main parts of the chapel had been finished. In 1606, Carlo Barberini had concluded a contract with two specialized masons from the firm of Bassi and Marchesi, who would take care of the marble slabs that had to cover the walls. He stipulated he would always be asked to judge the quality of the marble before it was anchored. Mistakes that had to be repaired would be the financial responsibility of these men.⁶¹

While work on the chapel's architecture and pictorial decoration steadily proceeded, in 1609 and 1610 it was time to think about statues. Therefore, in these years, Carlo and Maffeo engaged a number of sculptors as well.⁶² The final choice for the saints to be put in the niches of the chapel's two sidewalls, flanking the central doors, is, again, reflected in Maffeo's poetry.

In September 1609, Cardinal Barberini had ordered two pieces of choice marble to be delivered to Ambrogio Buonvicini and Nicolo Cori. According to a contract of October, 17, 1609, Cori was to make a statue of St. John the Baptist, seated, with the lamb at his feet. The model for it had been approved already. Significantly, it was stipulated that the Saint would be shown 'partly clothed, partly nude'. Cori was given eight months to finish his job, for the sum of 300 *scudi*. On the same conditions, Buonvicini would provide a St. John the Evangelist, for the opposite niche. Actually, the statue as finished is, despite the archival documents on which my case rests, sometimes attributed to Ippolito Buzio. Obviously, the two stand at the beginning and at the end of the New Testament, on which the Church's relationship with Christ is based

Another piece of marble had been given to Cristoforo Stati, called 'il Braccianese'; this was to be transformed into a St. Mary Magdalene, another of Maffeo's poetically acknowledged favourites: was not she

⁶¹ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1565, contract dated February 2, 1606.

⁶² *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1566, as well as Indice I, nr. 23; the two series of contracts supplement one another.

the perfect personification of the force of God's grace which a believer could acquire if, with the help of the Church, he or she showed penitence?

In 1610, Stati signed one more contract with Barberini, for the sculpture of two marble angels to adorn the architrave of the altar, at 500 *scudi* the pair. Meanwhile, Francesco Mochi had been engaged to sculpt Saint Martha, to be placed opposite her sister St Mary Magdalene. For then, as now, Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany, Martha's sister, were—erroneously—held to be one and the same.

What went wrong is not clear, but in 1610 Buonvicini takes on Cori's job for the statue of the Baptist.⁶³ Does the fact that he has made a new model, showing the Saint fully dressed, have to be interpreted as a second thought, either on the part of the patrons, or of the Theatine Fathers? It is obvious that, in the context of the spirituality of the Catholic Reform, the saint who paved the way for Christ could not be shown as an antique hero. We also know that Maffeo Barberini, who had started already to make some name for himself as a writer of Latin poems on religious themes, stressed the fact that allusions to the more profane realities of pagan antiquity really should be avoided as much as possible. In this case, too, the statue as finished—or perhaps rather: the statue that adorns the chapel nowadays—is attributed to yet another sculptor than the one who made it according to the documents, viz. to Pietro Bernini, whose hand does indeed seem evident, here. In fact, we do know that sometime after 1628 the then Pope Urban ordered some marble to be given to Bernini to sculpt a St. John.⁶⁴ The present statue shows, with a convincing sense of urgency, the saint dressed, even if only partly, in a sheep's skin, with his cruciform staff in his hand and one foot on a rock, a lamb at his other foot.

In 1611, Stati wrote to Carlo Barberini, alluding to a commission for a bust of Monsignore Francesco, the *auctor intellectualis* of the idea of a Barberini-chapel in Rome and, moreover, the man who had paved Maffeo's Roman way as well as providing him with a fortune. As if incidentally, Stati asked Carlo's permission to also use part of the marble given him for this job to work on a bust of Carlo himself. Stati's son would finish Francesco's likeness. Stati also reported that the statue of Mary Magdalene was ready, but, alas, not as beautiful as his much-admired model, that even gained praise from several other

⁶³ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1566, a contract dated April 24, 1610.

⁶⁴ Pollak, *o.c.*, I, 22.

artists.⁶⁵ The patrons did not seem to mind. In 1612, Stati was given the commission for the bust. For Uncle Francesco's likeness in marble 250 *scudi* were voted.⁶⁶ Whether these commissions ever were executed is unclear. If Stati produced the busts, they either were not placed in the chapel after all, or they were removed at a later date. Those who now visit the chapel are confronted not with two busts but with two statues. The one rather stiffly portrays Uncle Francesco, while in the other Carlo is more flamboyantly presented in the guise of a seated Roman general, obviously to stress the function he later acquired, that of General of Holy Church. Perhaps the very fact that Carlo wanted to be represented full-length, in his most important official guise, necessitated a complementary rendering of the old monsignore? However that may be, his statue definitely is not a work of Stati's; some have attributed it to Giuseppe Giorgetti.

Meanwhile, only the commission for the statue of Martha seems to have been unproblematic. Francesco Mochi finished it as ordered. Still, the chapel's sculpted decoration was not finished, yet.

In 1613, Pietro Bernini was asked to provide four white marble *putti*, to be placed above the two openings piercing the lateral walls, the one leading to the niche of Saint Sebastian, the other to the adjacent chapel. His as yet un-famous son Gianlorenzo was to assist him. The two Bernini were paid partly in un-worked marble.⁶⁷ However, here, too, problems of attribution have arisen. Contrary to the archival documents, some deem only the *putti* of the right wall to be by the Bernini, while they find signs of Francesco Mochi's hand in the cherubs of the left wall.

These contracts ended the first phase of the commissions the Barberini gave to some of Rome's leading artists for the construction and adornment of their family chapel. In the following decades, many other elements were added to it, mostly smaller and bigger sculptures, without, however, significantly altering its early 17th-century aspect and its main ideological message as represented in the pictorial decoration.

Surveying the genesis of the Barberini Chapel, several thoughts come to mind. First of all, one is struck by the cost that certainly was far from negligible. Though the sources do not allow for a detailed estimate,

⁶⁵ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1566, Stati to Barberini, October 21, 1611.

⁶⁶ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1566, a contract dated February 5, 1612.

⁶⁷ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1566, a contract dated February 4, 1612.

expenditure for the chapel cannot have been less than 11.000 *scudi*,⁶⁸ a sum on which some one hundred Roman wage-earning families could have subsisted for a year.⁶⁹ It shows the importance the Barberini attached to their chapel. Yet, one might argue that this possibly cannot have represented the total cost—knowing the Aldobrandini Chapel must have swallowed some 100.000 *scudi*, which, again, is a paltry sum compared to the stupendous amount of sc. 300.000 spent by Paul V on the Capella Paolina in Sta Maria Maggiore.⁷⁰

The patronage involved certainly enhanced the Barberini's prestige and, consequently, their power. The choice of Passignano, whose fame was at its peak precisely in these years, is as much an indication of the social necessity of patronage as the wording of the documents that stress that only the most "famous" sculptors should be employed. Secondly, the contracts, in their great detail, seem to circumscribe the relationship between the patrons and the artists as a rather unilateral one. There was little room for 'artistic liberty' as we understand it: the pictorial and sculptural decoration was pre-determined both in its grand concept and in its details.⁷¹

Maffeo Barberini, the main patron, seems to have been guided by the dictates of fashion prevalent in early 17th-century court culture, in which Rome and the popes took the lead, and to which a rising family did wise to conform. The recurring references to the Aldobrandini Chapel in Sta Maria Maggiore, and the Rucellai Chapel in Sant'Andrea itself—in their use of polychrome marbles these harked back to the Capella Gregoriana and the Capella Sistina, the former willed by Gregory XIII in St. Peter's and the latter by Sixtus V, in Sta Maria Maggiore—as well as passing remarks about chapels in other

⁶⁸ I have based this estimate on the accounts and receipts in *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 23, and Indice II, nr. 1566. For construction: *scudi* 5800. For the frescoes: *scudi* 2850. For the sculpture: *scudi* 1950. The cost of the four Bernini angels could not be found. For all kinds of changes during the job, at least an extra of *scudi* 490—see Indice II, nr. 1566 for documents on differences of estimates and opinions, May 1614—but probably more.

⁶⁹ On the basis of the accounts and receipts cited in the previous note, the daily wages of a simple workman can be estimated at some 35 *baiocchi*. A year normally did not have more than 300 effective working days. Thus one arrives at the sum of ca. 95 *scudi* annually. See on the problems involved: M. Petrocchi, *Roma nel Seicento* (Bologna 1970) 177 sqq.

⁷⁰ Pietrangeli, *o.c.*, 231, for the Capella Paolina. Roman *avvisi* said that the Aldobrandini chapel from 1601 onwards took some sc. 3000 a month. With construction lasting three or more years, one arrives at this estimate, probably erring on the lower side.

⁷¹ Cfr. Haskell, *o.c.*, 8–15.

Roman churches seem to situate the Barberini firmly in the patronage society that was Rome. There, families competed with one another for a place within that hierarchy of patrons⁷² that, on a higher level, existed between the great capitals of Europe as well.⁷³ For the monarchs and princes of Europe, challenged by the splendours of Rome, also tried to attract and attach the most famous artists to their courts, whether they be architects, musicians, painters, poets or scholars, and strove to realize buildings as grandiose as, or preferably rather more grandiose than the Roman examples.

The very fact that a few years after the Barberini Chapel had been completed, a new fashion of chapel decoration did set in shows people were constantly searching for new ways to present themselves, turning to new languages wherein to express their aspirations and beliefs. By the 1620s, the total space available for a family chapel would be constructed and decorated as a single “*macchina movimentata*”, one ‘moving complex’ involving the visitor-spectator in a truly Baroque, for integral experience of images and messages that must have made the Barberini Chapel look rather traditional, if not stuffy.⁷⁴

This does not in the slightest detract from the shrewdness and creativity shown by Maffeo Barberini in the choices he made around the turn of the century in following his own conscience that dictated his views on the way religious-ethical ideas ought to be artistically expressed. Of course these, too, reflected certain common currents in the period’s culture but they were rather more vigorously worded and propounded than was altogether usual. Perhaps one should conclude that in the complex, subtle play for prestige and power in papal Rome, Maffeo, the new arrival, surveying the means available, choose the newer language, the theologically and morally strict language of Trent that was slowly gaining ground, as against the more traditional language still prevailing in the decoration of public buildings, harking back to the Renaissance with its rather more open glorification of the values of Antiquity now by some condemned as outright pagan.

⁷² See: W. Gundersheimer, ‘Patronage in the Renaissance: An Exploratory Approach’ in: S. Orgel, G. Fitch Lytle, (eds.), *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton 1981), 3–26, and especially 13–18.

⁷³ See: J. von Kruedener, *Die Rolle des Hofes im Absolutismus* (Stuttgart 1973), especially 73^{sqq.}

⁷⁴ B. Treffers, *Een Hemel op Aarde. Extase in de Romeinse Barok* (Nijmegen 1995).

Opus finitum?

Let us follow the members of the Barberini family on their first ceremonial visit to Sant'Andrea, on December 8, 1616.⁷⁵ Present were, besides Cardinal Maffeo, his brothers Antonio, the monk, and Carlo, the manager, as well as Carlo's three sons Francesco, Taddeo and Antonio, all students at the *Collegio Romano*. Entering the church, they would have seen the nave in its finished state, though the great cupola and the apse still awaited their frescoes by Domenichino and Lanfranco. However, the Barberini Chapel had been, finally, completed. Much thought had been given to the inscriptions that should tell the visitor of its origins and patrons. The choice had fallen on a text which, not very originally, informed the visitor the chapel had been founded by Maffeo and Carlo Barberini, to comply with the last will and testament of their uncle Francesco, to the greater glory of the House of Barberini.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, Cardinal Barberini had promised the Theatine Fathers a semi-annual remittance from his income of shares and from pensions he held on abbeys in Apulia, Aquila and Basilicata. In the act of transfer, he stipulated that in the chapel 'of our House of Barberini' Mass would be said daily. However, each Monday, the Holy Sacrament would be shown, and the Theatines would read Mass there for the salvation of those poor souls who had entered Purgatory; on those occasions they would also preach there and a multitude of wax tapers would be lit; significantly, as an indication of one of Maffeo's passions, there would be music on these days as well.⁷⁷

The day chosen for the Barberini's visit was not, of course, a chance one—in Rome, nothing important ever was allowed to happen without a religious reason. The previous day, Pope Paul V had issued a Brief that conceded a plenary indulgence to anyone who visited the altar of Mary in Sant'Andrea on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Both sexes would acquire this grace if, after having confessed themselves and after having received Holy Communion, they directed 'their pious prayers to God, for the unity of the Christian princes, the extinction of heresy and the exaltation of Mother Church'.⁷⁸ The fact that the fame of Maffeo's creation really had reached the Pope is borne out by

⁷⁵ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1567.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, a series of notes on inscriptions.

⁷⁷ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 23, an undated contract.

⁷⁸ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1568, Brief of Paul V, dated December 7, 1616.

the following passage in the Brief, where Paul specifically refers to the chapel that has ‘now, as We have been told, been in the most splendid manner installed by our beloved son Maffeo, cardinal-priest of the title of San Onofrio’.

A few years later, after Maffeo had become Urban, the glowing words of a Latin description⁷⁹ recall an anonymous visitor’s impression of the chapel. Looking around, he ‘admired the various marbles, pure white, dappled or coloured, the pavement and the walls covered not only with onyx but also with soft-coloured alabaster, and incrustated with jasper from Corsica’. The columns, of purple marble, the amethysts on the candlesticks, all this ‘breathes an atmosphere of utter beauty’. From their niches in the lateral walls, the statues look down on him: the saints Martha and Mary Magdalene, facing one another, and the prophets John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, who are posed opposite as well. In the cupola, God the Father sits enthroned in his might, surrounded by the four main virtues. On the walls, scenes illustrate the life of the Virgin: her birth, the annunciation, the visitation and her assumption; all around, lesser virtues are symbolised by angels. The visitor also is reminded of the monument erected to the memory of Uncle Francesco, who had ordered the chapel to be built, and whose money had paid for it.⁸⁰ The description specifically stresses the importance of a visit to the adjoining recess in the church’s façade wall, where a fresco by Passignano recalls the retrieval of the body of St Sebastian from the drainage channel into which it had been dumped, while a stone carries an inscription telling of the saint’s martyrdom on this spot, and the cult that has developed here.⁸¹ This reference brings us to the last, not least important aspect of Maffeo’s chapel.

⁷⁹ BAV, *Archivio Chigi*, vol. 7373, ‘Descrittione della capella di Papa Urbano fatto in S.Andrea della Valle’.

⁸⁰ BAV, AB, Indice I, nr. 23, sheets with several texts for inscriptions.

⁸¹ The text of the inscription is: *Sanctus Sebastianus miles Christi fortissimus/ sagittis Diocletiani iussu configitur/ Virgis ceditur, in cloacam dejicitur/ Inde a Lucina matrona Romana/ Eximitur, et in Calixto cimiterio conditur/ Facti iudicem pleps olim venerabunda/ Aediculam excitavit. Cuius nuper altare maius cum absido stetit/ Hanc Sixtus V.P.M. ea lege aequari solo permisit/ illius pars nova aedis ambitu includeretur./ Ad retinendum loci religionem, rei que memoriam/ Maphaeus S.R.E. Presbyter cardinalis Barberinus/ Hoc voluit extare monumentum anno salutis MDC XVI.*

Conclusion: Capella sanctificatur

For the chapel to become a place of real worship, and, thus, a real asset to the Barberini's status, underlining the prestige and power of this family, no amount of money spent could, of course, suffice. True, Pope Paul's Brief granting a plenary indulgence to those visiting its altar on the indicated day definitely was helpful. Still, Maffeo must have realized his creation lacked the finishing touch, the touch of real sanctity.

Despite the fact that he wrote a poem on the emotion caused by seeing a picture of Saint Sebastian's suffering and his trust in Jesus, it is unlikely that this minor martyr really was the chosen object of Maffeo's piety,⁸² though, apparently, people did come to this chapel to venerate the arrow-pierced young man.

As indicated above, the program specifically developed for the chapel's decoration and reflecting Barberini's real devotion consisted almost entirely of Marian scenes. Yet, the cult of the Virgin did not enable Barberini to attribute some more material sanctification to his chapel: real relics of the Virgin certainly were not easily found. Hence, it is not difficult to see what induced Maffeo to start a search for other holy objects connected with the major New Testament persons represented in the chapel, to be put there and turn it into a place pilgrims would come to and remember.

Why, besides for the reasons I gave above, he selected Mary Magdalene, Martha and the two Johns, the saints particularly revered in the chapel, in the first place, is not easily explained, though they all seem to personify the drama of humility and repentance he sought to infuse into his own special brand of Baroque poetry and piety. This is shown in the verses he devoted to Mary Magdalene and in the paintings of her which he and his nephews owned; for I found that, besides a Passignano-'Mary Magdalene', the huge Barberini collections came to hold dozens of other pictures and drawings showing this saint, who easily took precedence over all others, coming first behind Christ, the Virgin and the man who was, perhaps, the Barberini family's traditional patron, Saint Francis—the number of family members named after saints of the Franciscan Order and its various branches was and remained quite great.⁸³ Incidentally, Saint John the Baptist may have

⁸² Maffeo Barberini, *Poemata*, 155, a Greek and a Latin version. Unless otherwise stated, I use the Paris-1642 edition of the Pope's poems. Cf. Appendix, Chapter II.

⁸³ M.A. Lavin, *Seventeenth-Century Barberini Documents and Inventories of Art* (New York

been among Maffeo's choices because he was a Florentine favourite; he owned a Passignano painting of this saint as well.⁸⁴

Once chosen, these New Testament saints may well have dictated the Cardinal's search for objects that would enhance his chapel with material holiness. Yet, of the four persons venerated in the Capella Barberini, three must have presented considerable difficulties in this respect. For the remains of the two St Johns, as well as of St Martha supposedly were buried in the Near East and could not easily be acquired. Quite luckily, however, the body of St Mary Magdalene had been put to rest within a somewhat easier reach of the powerful prelate Maffeo now was. According to legend, her bones reposed in a monastery in the South of France, in the Provençal town of Saint Maximin-de-St-Baume. Hence, to the authorities governing that monastery Cardinal Barberini directed his request for some of the Saint's remains.

The quest for the Magdalene proved not an easy one, though. It lasted, effectively, from 1617 to 1624. We know about it from Maffeo's correspondence with an influential Provençal nobleman, Nicolas Fabri de Peiresc, a member of the *Parlement* of the Provence, at Aix, whose help the Cardinal sought and found, if only because Peiresc, besides cherishing the friendship of a learned and powerful prelate, had shown himself an effective admirer and, indeed, propagator of Barberini's poems.⁸⁵

The monastery's superiors had to be convinced first. They did not prove amenable. And, one may well ask, why should they have been? As their monastery was, since the 13th century, one of the most celebrated and visited shrines in the French Midi, they must have thought there was no reason to part with even one piece of the Saint's venerable and profitable body. Therefore, high-placed officials in Paris had to be approached. The Lord Chancellor of France was asked to sign a warrant. When it did not suffice, Peiresc's brother, influential at court,

1975), 504–505 for the Passignano-painting. Pp. 629–631 list all the representations of Mary Magdalen. Pp. 588–591 list the paintings representing Saint Francis.

⁸⁴ Pollak, *o.c.*, 335.

⁸⁵ The letters are preserved among the extensive Barberini-Peiresc correspondence: *BAV*, *BL*, Vols. 6502 and 6503. This correspondence will be published shortly by P.J.A.N. Rietbergen and Chr. Berkvens-Stevelinck. For the episode of St. Mary Magdalene: V. Saxer, 'Lettres de Peiresc au cardinal Maffeo Barberin sur le détachement et l'expédition des reliques de Sainte Marie-Magdalène à Saint-Maximin (1618–1624)', in: *Provence Historique*, 31 (1981), 11 sqq. See also chapter II of this book.

explained Barberini's quest, the quest of a high-placed prelate, a former nuncio to France and a friend of the French, to King Louis XIII. Time went by. Finally, His Most Christian Majesty decided to consent—not least, one suspects, because in the meantime Cardinal Maffeo Barberini had become Pope Urban VIII. Yet, even with a royal order, things did not go smoothly. The good burghers of Saint Maximin-de-St-Baume would not allow the remains of their patron saint to be tampered with. In the end, the desired relics had to be stealthily removed, by night, to be smuggled to Marseille and, thence, via Leghorn, brought to Rome, to be deposited in the Barberini Chapel. Now, the great work really was finished.

In the following years, the chapel became the image in stone of a family's continuity and power, represented in the tombs and monuments commemorating various Barberini men and women positioned against its walls. Of course, Urban VIII himself was buried in St. Peter's, where, since the late 15th century, most popes have been put to rest. But the Pope's saintly brother, Cardinal Antonio the Elder, though buried in Santa Maria della Concezione, was given a commemorative slab in the family chapel, as was Urban's most trusted nephew, the Cardinal-*Padrone* Francesco Barberini, who was buried in St. Peter's as well. Also, all secular members of the Pope's immediate family were interred in the chapel, viz. his trusted brother Carlo, whom he had made first Prince of Palestrina, and General of Holy Church and Carlo's son Taddeo, second Prince of Palestrina and Prefect of Rome. Two medallions honour the patrons' parents, Antonio Barberini and Camilla Barbadori.⁸⁶ A portrait in mosaics recalls the memory of Antonio Barbadori, Maffeo and Carlo's maternal uncle, the last of his family and, as an inscription tells, 'well-deserved by the House of Barberini'.⁸⁷

Thus, the Barberini Chapel, with all its relics—including, perhaps, the piece of the True Cross that Urban removed from Sta Anastasia in 1628?⁸⁸—and its monuments, marks a historical process, serving as a memory in marble and semi-precious stones of the vicissitudes of a family, of the careers of some of its more important members, of

⁸⁶ *BAV, AB*, Indice II, nr. 1567, texts for inscriptions, among which one dated 1629 to commemorate Camilla, and another one for Antonio, who has been buried in the Barberini family chapel in Florence.

⁸⁷ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, nr. 23, a document indicating the place where the monument has to be erected, and the inscription, dated 1620, following Barbadori's death in 1615.

⁸⁸ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 9928, fols. 2–4^v.

their social and political aspirations but certainly also of their religious ideas against the background of Tridentine Rome and Italy in the late 16th and early 17th century. When, in 1623, Maffeo Barberini, having become Urban VIII, took formal possession of his town in the usual sumptuous procession, the famous rhetorician Angelo Mascardi, in his printed comment on the cavalcade's pictorial program did not fail to note the chapel among the more grandiose manifestations of the new pope's specific combination of fervent religion and love of the arts, describing it as 'the carved image of his religious magnificence.'⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Angelo Mascardi, *Le Pompe del Campidoglio* (Rome 1624), 78.

CHAPTER TWO

MAFFEO BARBERINI—URBAN VIII, THE POET-POPE, OR: THE POWER OF POETIC PROPAGANDA

Introduction

In the early years of the pontificate of Paul V (1605–1621), an anonymous *avisatore* assembled a series of short biographies outlining the characters and characteristics of the various cardinals who would take part in the conclave if the Pope were to die. About Maffeo Barberini he wrote, after a brief sketch of his career: ‘he is a man of great talent, well versed in Italian letters, in Latin and in Greek; though more assiduous than brilliant, he is of an honourable nature, without any baseness’, which was praise indeed in view of the judgement he passed on some other eminent candidates. It also shows that, already as a cardinal, Barberini was known as a writer, a poet.¹

Some twenty years later, when Maffeo had become Urban, the well-known *litterato* Fulvio Testi described to a friend an evening he had spent with the Pope. Apologizing to Urban for not having written any poetry recently due to his increased work load, Testi was gently reprimanded when the Pope remarked: ‘We, too, have some business to attend to, but nevertheless for Our recreation sometimes We compose a poem’. Urban went on to tell that he had lately written some Latin poems and would like Testi to read them. ‘And hence, retreating into the next room where he sleeps, he fetched some sheets and started to read to me an ode written after the manner of Horace, which really was very beautiful. I have lauded it and praised it to the stars because certainly as to Latin compositions the Pope has few or none who equal him.’²

¹ *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Manoscritti Boncompagni-Ludovisi*, Vol. C 20, f. 167v: “è signore d’ingegno grande, di belle lettere vulgari, latine e greche, e piuttosto assegnato che splendido, ma honorato, senza sordidezza”.

² M.L. Doglio, ed., *F. Testi. Le Lettere, II. 1634–1637* (Bari 1967), 373–374: “E noi pure abbiamo qualche negozio e con tutto ciò per nostra ricreazione facciamo alle volte qualche componimento” (...) “e così tirandosi nell’altra camera, dove dorme, ha dato di piglio a un foglio, e m’ha letto un’ode fatta a imitazione d’Orazio, che veramente

However, in 1643, the praise that, for yet another twenty years, had been bestowed on the poems of Pope Urban VIII came to a sudden end. Obviously, the Barberini's disgrace which marked the first year after Urban's death made people wary to continue lauding the late pope's poetry. Publishers also must have thought twice before deciding to run a new edition; understandably, they rather tried to curry favour with the new Pope, Innocent X (1644–1655), who was known to be less than interested in such forms of culture and, moreover, positively hated his predecessor. While Innocent's successor, Alexander VII (1655–1667), was, again, a great patron of the arts, he nevertheless was too self-centred, not to say vain, to encourage initiatives that would ensure the reputation of Pope Urban as a poet; he rather sought to make his own mark than propagate the fame of the Barberini pope. Also, the taste of the times had changed. Hence, a critical evaluation of Urban's poems, not hampered by the pope's powerful presence, did not arise. The 18th century saw a few new editions of his works, amongst which, surprisingly, a full-blown Oxford one. The 19th century remained silent on this aspect of Urban's biography and of its bearing on papal cultural policy, partly because it did not conceive of the papacy in terms of a cultural agency with obvious propagandistic aims and partly because of its new appreciation of the poet as the romantic genius. Only the great chronicler of the popes, Ludwig von Pastor, dealt with Urban's efforts in this field.³ After him, there was silence again, till the 1970's saw a faint glimmer of renewed interest.

*A poetic program? "Levan di terra al Ciel
nostr'intelletto"—"they lift our understanding towards Heaven"⁴*

Poetry may well have been Maffeo Barberini's first and most important inclination. Therefore, it is amazing that at least as far as I know no one has ever thought of analysing Maffeo's life's achievements in terms of what obviously were his life's greatest joy, his poems. Admittedly, it would be stretching the available evidence too far if I were to suggest

è bellissima. Io l'ho lodata et esaltata fino alle stelle perche certo nei componimenti Latini il Papa ha pochi o nissun che l'aguagli."

³ L. von Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, XIII–2 (Freiburg 1928), 900–909.

⁴ This is the motto of: G.F. Ferranti, ed., *Poesie latine del cardinale Maffeo Barberini hoggi papa Urbano ottavo* (Rome 1642).

there exists some kind of hermetically worded poetic program that, if disclosed, would give us a key to all of Maffeo's actions. Nevertheless, Maffeo's poetic compositions, both the ones written before his pontificate and the ones composed after his election, offer important clues to his thinking. It seems to me they can and should be read as a running commentary on many of the issues he had to confront, on many of the actions he did take; they even seem to suggest a unity of thought that may help to give meaning to a number of his deeds and, moreover, point to a surprising consistency and continuity in his policy.

However, as most of the poems are difficult to date exactly—neither the manuscript nor the printed sources allow this—some of the suggestions made hereafter cannot but be tentative.⁵ Still, as collections of Cardinal Barberini's poetry were published even before he was elected to the papacy, we can at least date most of the poems to either before or after 1623.⁶ Thus, we can try to determine which ideas had germinated before this decisive moment in Maffeo's life and career and which ones were written later, under the pressure of drastically changed circumstances and, therefore, outlooks.

Maffeo's early poetry: from the dangers of life's pleasures and the obligations of family "pietas" to the glorification of Divine Wisdom

Although this chapter does not aim to offer a potted biography, some data on the early life of the man who became Pope Urban VIII have to be provided first.

Maffeo Barberini was born on April 5, 1568 as the youngest of the six sons of Antonio Barberini and Camilla Barbadori, who were citizens of Florence. Young Maffeo was first sent to school with the Florentine Jesuits and then, in 1584, moved to Rome to live under the tutelage of

⁵ A valuable effort has been made by: M. Castagnetti, 'I "Poemata" e le "Poesie Toscane" di Maffeo Barberini. I. Stampe e problemi di cronologia', in: *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Patavina di Scienze, Lettere et Arti*, Series IV, XXXIX (1979/1980), 283–388. Yet, her lists (318–388) are both incomplete and, to a large extent, approximate, only.

⁶ According to M. Costanzo, *Critica e Poetica del Primo Seicento. Vol. II: Maffeo e Francesco Barberini, Cesarini, Pallavicino* (Rome 1971), between 1620 and 1643 some 15 authorized collections of Maffeo's Latin poems were published, whereas of the Italian verses only 5 editions appeared, between 1635 and 1642. My own counting differs from Castagnetti's—as in note 5, *supra*—and Costanzo's. In Appendix I, a list of the editions is given of the collections I have been able to trace. Besides the manuscript texts, they form the basis of this chapter.

his uncle Francesco. In Rome, too, he was schooled in the humanistic curriculum of the Jesuits, in their famous *Collegio Romano*. Despite his obvious cultural interests, the career mapped out for a young man of his social background demanded that he go on to university to study for a law degree. This he did, at Pisa, where he spent several years. Though he wanted to marry, nothing came of the match arranged for him by his mother. Therefore he returned to Rome in 1588, to seek a career in the Church. With the initial aid of his uncle he soon succeeded, gaining one position after the other and thus moving upwards in the hierarchy of the Curia. The life he had started in 1588 found its culmination in 1623, with his election to the papacy.

Since most of Maffeo's published poems are not dated, and the manuscript texts, preserved in the Vatican Library's *Barberini Latini*, give little information as well, it is somewhat difficult to determine when young Maffeo first embarked on his poetical career. Obviously, the writing of poetry was part of the accomplishments of a gentleman-scholar and therefore incorporated in the educational curriculum of the elite. In his youth, the main influences on Italian poetry still were the sonnets of Petrarch. Recently, some 13 Italian sonnets of young Barberini have been published, all, apparently, written between 1580 and 1600,⁷ i.e. from the age of twelve onwards. These so-called Tuscan poems, especially in the form of these early sonnets, are visibly less formal, rather more eclectic and, indeed, sometimes more gallant than Maffeo's later Latin poetry.⁸ It is not clear whether Maffeo ever planned to publish these early exercises, although his biographer Nicoletti seems to suggest there existed a project to do so in 1617.⁹ In the end, the first edition of the Pope's *opere volgari* appeared only in 1635. However, since, of course, it would not do for a Roman pontiff to have his early, however chastely-worded explorations of the land of the senses publicly revealed, the poems praising female beauty and the love generated by the desired object were suppressed.

Reading the manuscript poems, it is obvious that some of them have a thematic unity of their own, addressing life's major moments and problems in describing Man's experiences between the poles of birth

⁷ Costanzo, *o.c.* The manuscripts of these poems are preserved in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4009.

⁸ Costanzo, *o.c.*, 15–35.

⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4730, the *Vita* by Nicoletti.

and death, the experiences of sensual love and hope of fame, but, also, of conversion, and of mystical elevation. Already, they give us a glimpse of the development of Maffeo's ideas.

Specifically the sonnet-cycle, if it can so be called, in describing Man's life as he is led astray by the pleasures of the world presented its various topics moralistically: the reader is admonished to withstand the world's seductions and take the path to virtue, which shall be obtained in Heaven. In the 13th sonnet, about the sacred stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi, Maffeo addresses Man's soul, writing: "Though now you may be denuded, you will be rich in Heaven".¹⁰ Significantly, the theme of poverty, which would be recurring over the following decades, is prominent already. Stylistically, these poems do show the general influence of Petrarch and, more specifically, of Giovanni Battista Marino (1569–1625), in their mostly moderate but sometimes also extreme lyricism. Still, this juvenile dossier of Maffeo's, which antedates even his early years as a young prelate, shows genuine feeling, never assuming the fulsome rhetoric of the time. Nor does it display his later, more Baroque tendency to use intricate parallels and antitheses, to create complex *con-cetti*.

Besides these poems, only recently published, many others remain unread in the Barberini manuscripts. Some of them show the aspiring poet at work in the 1580's, in the milieu of such late 16th-century poets as Giovanni Aleandro (1574–1649), Aurelio Orsi and Giovanni Battista Strozzi, who moved in the more exalted circles of Curial culture. Obviously, The young prelate—not a priest, yet!—sought to improve on first thoughts and elaborate his ideas in engaging in discussion with, precisely, such more established authors as Orsi.¹¹

Among Maffeo's late-juvenile efforts is a poem praising the eyes of a certain young lady of the Florentine family of Del Nero, as well as an entire cycle devoted to "Portia", but also an ode to the Arno, the river of his home town, and a text addressed to Pietro Aldobrandini, the Cardinal-Nephew of the reigning pope, Clement VIII, who is advised to support his uncle and, in his stead, rule the world—a first indication of Barberini's views on nepotism.¹²

¹⁰ Costanzo, *o.c.*, sonnet 13: "S'or nuda sei, nel Ciel ricca sarai."

¹¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4009, f. 18^r, sqq.

¹² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3757, fols 1^r–55^r. Some of these also can be found in *BAV, BL*, Vol. 1919, which has other juvenilia as well.

The intermediate years: professional and poetic developments

Though Maffeo constantly complained his many tasks kept him from his favourite pastime, yet even while in residence at his see of Spoleto, or, later, as prefect of the *Segnatura della Giustizia*, he continued to write poetry—now starting to compose Latin verses as well—and to discuss it with others, both eliciting their comments and commenting on their own efforts. Thus, he argues about the effect of repetition, analyses the function of specific sounds, and accepts proposals for alternative wordings in his odes.¹³

Maffeo's Latin verses were part of a poetic movement that characterised the beginning of the 17th century. It was a poetry that hoped to effect moral restoration: its main aim was didactic. In the choice of his topics, the young prelate proposed ideals he often took from the world of the early Christians who he held up as examples to its readers. His poetry affected a sober style, of a somewhat biblical bent, stressing the epic and, indeed, tragic aspects of its subject matter. While stylistically the verses of the early 17th century grew out of the Marinism of Maffeo's early years, it increasingly rejected its complex sensuality. It finally reached a moderate Baroque style, characterised by such epithets as grand and sublime, proportionate and yet splendid.

In achieving this new style, Maffeo was clearly influenced by the men he met as he moved up the ladder of the curial hierarchy, which was the ladder of worldly success as well. Now, his poetic inclinations automatically brought him the friendship—if rivals ever can be friends—of his (younger) contemporaries such as Virginio Cesarini (1595–1624)¹⁴ and Giovanni Ciampoli (1589–1643), who dominated the Roman literary scene. They all were affected by the work of Gabriele Chiabrera (1552–1637), the main exponent of the Baroque style of Italian poetry whom Maffeo honoured with laudatory poems and with whom he maintained a correspondence.¹⁵

Indeed, Maffeo's poems seem specifically indebted to the classical ideals of Chiabrera though I feel that Chiabrera's rather bloodless use

¹³ E.g. the many letters in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2047.

¹⁴ There seems to be no contemporary study of his works. See, however, his poems in: *Septem virorum illustrium poemata* (Amsterdam 1672).

¹⁵ Cfr. G. Getto, *Barocco in Prosa e in Poesia* (Milan 1969), 405–476 for the background. The poems are in: Maffeo Barberini, *Poemata* (Paris 1642), 131–132; 142; 179–180; 181–182.

of Christian heroes clothed in classical garb lacks the religious fire Barberini proved capable of instilling in his better poetry.

Chiabrera, a client of the ducal house of Savoy, liked to take such saints as Mary Magdalene and Sebastian as the focal point of his heroic-moralistic poems, as, for example, in the ones he dedicated to Christina of Loraine in 1598. His experiments with Greek metre influenced Maffeo as well.¹⁶ In 1614–1615, we find him commenting on Maffeo's poems. His criticism was mild, understandably, perhaps, since, by that time, Maffeo already was one of the more influential cardinals of the Curia, whose patronage now was sought by Chiabrera himself: such were the reversals of fortune and position that could be the effect of power in the field of high culture. No wonder Chiabrera wrote an ode for him, using, as so many were to do for the next thirty years, the panegyric theme of the Barberini bees.¹⁷

Yet, though Maffeo generally took his clues from the Pindaric odes favoured by Chiabrera, his metre was rather more Horatian. Still, in Chiabrera's wake, his poetry developed along dithyrambic lines, using sometimes overwrought hyperbole and rhythm to create the desired emotional tension, a 'sweet disorder', to use the characteristic of this genre of poetry given by Mario Praz.¹⁸ But whereas Chiabrera's poems sometimes verged on the excessive in their stylistic choices, Maffeo's by and large remained moderate.

An important aspect of Maffeo's poetry becomes evident in the poems he dedicated to or rather directed at various members of his family, revealing what kind of ideals he tried to impose upon them. In a sense, they were both his material and his readership. Most of these poems probably date from the period of his cardinalate when he was considered the family's actual head. Precisely because Maffeo was the Barberini's 'spiritual guide' as well as their most prominent social and political representative, some of the poems of this 'intermediate period' are of specific importance in determining what was the nature of his 'nepotism' before I study the phenomenon in its final, papal context, so often interpreted purely negatively. Moreover, in analysing Maffeo's influence on his nephew Francesco, whom he raised and who was to be his closest and most powerful collaborator during the twenty-odd years

¹⁶ C. Jannacão, M. Capucci, *Storia Letteraria d'Italia. Vol. V. Il Seicento* (Milan 1986), 234 sqq.

¹⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6462, fols. 1^r–14^v hold the Chiabrera-Barberini correspondence.

¹⁸ M. Praz, *Mnemosyne. The Parallel between Literature and the Visual Arts* (Princeton 1974).

of his papal reign and shaped papal cultural policies as much as his uncle did,¹⁹ I feel we can actually also get to know the man behind the Pope.

In a piece titled *Trias inclyta fratrum*, Maffeo outlined the different ways taken by each of the three Barberini brothers of his own generation who had moved to Rome: with Antonio pursuing a life of poverty following in the footsteps of Christ, and Carlo, who had married, raising and educating his children, he himself is obeying the call of his vocation, cultivating his career in the Church. Nevertheless, Maffeo is fully aware of the lure of worldly glory. In his Sonnets 25, 26 and 46²⁰ he admonishes himself to battle against vanity, and to accept that rather than being their own fulfilment with the fame they bring, his poems should be seen as the key to Heaven, through an understanding of Heaven's intentions.

Meanwhile, just as his own uncle had advanced his career, Maffeo, too, had decided at least one of his kin in the next generation should directly profit from his growing power and success. The moral obligation of *pietas* was, after all, to be directed first and foremost to one's own relatives. In 1614 we find young Francesco, one of Carlo's sons, studying at his uncle's old school, the *Collegio Romano*. Lessons are, apparently, quite strenuous, and the young man shows his worries in a letter to Uncle Maffeo.²¹ He is sent a long poem, mapping the path he will have to take. In order to better interpret this *Ode hortatoria ad virtutem*, one should turn to a contemporary letter written by Maffeo to his brother, the Capuchin friar Antonio. In this poem, for the first time he explained the principles that guided his poetry and, indeed, become evident in the composition of the long ode for Francesco and of another one, composed for Antonio himself.²² He states it is his aim to christianize the mythological themes that prevail in contemporary culture, and thus steer the readers from the profane to the sacred, from the temptations and worries of the World to the consolation of Heavenly Wisdom. With many classical references, mainly to Greek mythology, the *Exhortatio ad virtutem* as it is also called charts the path of life for the young student, calling upon him to become acquainted with music and poetry

¹⁹ See chapter III of this book.

²⁰ *Poesie Toscane* (Rome 1635).

²¹ Francesco to Maffeo as quoted in: *Costanzo*, o.c., 113.

²² Maffeo to Antonio, 12 April 1614, as cited in: *Costanzo*, o.c., 111. The ode for Antonio is in: *BAl, BL*, Vol. 10088, fols. 61–62. See also: *Poemata* (Paris 1623), 42–43.

as the means to spread Divine Wisdom, thus following the course Maffeo is taking himself. Yet, Francesco should be aware of the snares of 'lust, which speaks with a charming tongue'. Like Ulysses, he should withstand the sirens. Like Theseus, he should hold to the thread of Ariadne. In taking the steep path of virtue, he will finally see Heaven and shine like a new star.²³

In the ode addressed to his brother Antonio—'the most loved one', viz. of all his brothers: the other ones always have to do without this epithet!—Maffeo stresses the virtue of poverty, admonishing Antonio to trace the steps of St. Francis, and adopt those religious ideals of which the bare feet are the outward sign. Yet, he realizes that his own mission forces him to follow a different course. Another poem probably composed before Maffeo's accession to the papacy, is addressed at his brother Carlo, instructing him on his role as father and educator—of young Francesco, among others. Three vices should be avoided at any cost: avarice, lust and pride.²⁴

Two other poems of uncertain but probably later date indicate the roles Maffeo planned for Carlo's two other sons, young Antonio and Taddeo. They seem to continue the ideal he had adopted a few years before.

Antonio, who later entered the priesthood, was admonished to study and develop his poetical qualities, as these were highly suitable to man of the Church: the text that went with the emblem which was attached to this poem in a later edition read 'there is sweet knowledge in honey and the muse', meaning, of course, in the virtue that came from the bee—and, hence, from the Barberini?—as a messenger of Divine Wisdom and in poetry as its expression. However, though Antonio did become a great patron of the arts, especially of music, his life turned out rather less exemplary than must have been pleasing to his papal uncle—he was known to have a long-standing affair with his castrato-lover.

Taddeo, who was destined for a career in the world, was told that the ways of that world inevitably were the ways of vice but that it was possible to proceed towards virtue and, thus, to reach God. In the above mentioned edition of Maffeo's poems, the caption of the emblem adorning this piece read: 'though the bee is small, it can inflict big wounds', meaning, obviously, that Divine Wisdom did not

²³ *Poemata* (Paris 1623), 35–39.

²⁴ *Poemata* (Paris 1623), 45.

need an entire army to reach its goal—which reminds one of the stupidity of Stalin’s famous question ‘how many divisions does the pope command?’ Alas, the papacy did have to rely on its secular arm, sometimes, but Taddeo, who was made General of Holy Church, proved rather unsatisfactory as a military man.

A 20th-century observer would feel Maffeo opens his mind rather more clearly in a letter he wrote to one of his nieces, Camilla, Carlo’s daughter. When she asked him to counsel her on her plans to take the veil, he took pains to cover two sheets with advice that sounds thoroughly modern, showing insight into the psychology of a young girl raised in the probably rather strict confines of a Florentine patrician family. He tells her that to really know whether she has the calling, she should spend considerable time in searching her own mind, trying to know her deepest wishes as well as her strengths and her weaknesses. Especially in the young, the voice of vocation can be deceptive, Maffeo suggests, and moreover one does not always know one’s own motives in following it. Also, if one has made up one’s mind, one should be careful in selecting the right establishment. It has to be a nunnery with a definite, strict rule—we hear an echo of Maffeo’s wish for discipline according to the Church’s old traditions—but one should not engage upon a way of life that one could not sustain. Camilla would do well to consult her Capuchin uncle Antonio—another instance of the reverence with which Maffeo always treated his brother, whose world-renouncing way of life he openly admired, and envied. Concluding, Maffeo argues that it is essential Camilla should be aware of her own, complete freedom in this matter—he even seems to intimate that her parents’ wishes, if such there are, should not prevail. If, however, she decides to go through with her plan, Maffeo will give her the dowry that will allow her to enter the monastery of her choice.²⁵

It is important to note that in all these cases of poetic exhortation—there are moralistic exhortations addressed to his brothers Alessandro, Giovanni Donato and Nicolò as well²⁶—we find Maffeo Barberini outlining a way of life, a system of ethics that he wanted both himself and his relatives to adhere to. It is important, too, to note that this was in 1614 or thereabouts, long before he could have dreamt of attaining

²⁵ *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 4729, fols. 625^r–626^r, Maffeo to Camilla, 6 April 1613.

²⁶ Maffeo Barberini, *Pomata*, 96–97; 98–100; 112–115, on the following topics: “Qua ratione pravus animi affectus fugiendus, et curandus”; “Inanis eruditio sine pietate”; and: “Militia est vita hominis super terram”.

the highest position within the Church and sharing it with his relatives, according to contemporary ideas about family *pietas* and, hence, nepotism.²⁷ In these years, though Maffeo Barberini, in a way, gave word to ideals that were part of the customary culture of a man of his background, education and status in Roman society, both the sustained quantity and the quality of his poetry, his chosen means of expression, were far from usual. Moreover, his poems also embody the changes that were working in that culture, that was moving away from the ‘pagan’ Classicism of the Renaissance to the post-Tridentine ideals of the Baroque.

The last phase: the apogee of papal poetry

The first period of Maffeo’s poetry, spanning the years of his youth till approximately 1600, the year which marked the beginning of his career as a high-ranking prelate, can be characterised as rather conventional in its emphasis on Man’s need to lead a virtuous life, while at the same time it shows the usual encomiastic tendencies of a man who operates in a court society. The second period, while continuing in this vein, shows a more obvious predilection for religious themes presented in a moralistic manner. This period stretches well into the first years of the papacy, but in the later 1620’s another change becomes noticeable.

Almost compulsively, Maffeo, now Pope Urban, takes every opportunity to use his poetic qualities to further the cause of the Church and, in it, the position of the Roman primate. Consequently, in its thematic choices his poetry acquires a decidedly political quality that it lacked in the earlier periods.

Thus, the great poem on the Countess Matilda of Tuscany (1046–1114), probably coinciding with Urban’s decision to ask Bernini to begin her monument in St. Peter’s, in 1633, stresses the territorial integrity of the Papal States which, of course, had grown from her bequest of her extensive lands in Central Italy to the Church and its ruler. Indeed, in the years following 1631, Urban had ordered the restoration and the extension of the famous “Galleria delle Carte Geografiche”, with the huge frescoed maps of the world, in the Vatican Palace, to show

²⁷ This point seems to me to have been overlooked by Scott, *o.c.*, who bases a not unimportant part of his analysis of the decoration of the Barberini Palace on a papal-nepotistic interpretation precisely of the ode for young Francesco.

the visitors from all over Christendom the position of the papacy in (Christian) Europe and the role that Christian Europe should play in the world.

From 1633/1634 dates the poetic call for a new Holy War against the infidel Turks, which would have restored the papacy to its ancient role as the leader of Christendom. It coincides, probably not incidentally, with the dedication of the canopy over St Peter's tomb in the Vatican basilica, exactly 1333 years after the dedication of old St Peter's by Pope Sylvester. Bernini's grand baldachin, with its helical columns, was meant to symbolize a 'machine', a road that moved one to Heaven. Admittedly, the Pope himself had written: 'Nec Turri Babyloniae nec Montibus gigantibus, sed Scala Iacobi, et Caroli Borromaei Vestigiis et Bellarmini Gradibus Coelum peti...';²⁸ as if to indicate that, rather than create great monuments, people should take the two great Tridentine saints-scholars as their examples. Yet, he had taken the bronze from the Pantheon—the temple dedicated to 'all the gods'—to raise a monument in the temple dedicated to the One, True God. It was an absolutely meaningful act, the more so as, of course, this temple, in the Vatican, with this canopy, were the 'copies' of the ones in Jerusalem—the church of the Holy Sepulchre, with its canopy over the main altar—, just as Rome was the 'second' Jerusalem. To recapture that first Jerusalem, now ruled by the Infidel, was one of Urban's great projects.²⁹

The tone of Barberini's later poems changed as well. Increasingly, it seems the Pope felt that good poetry was, indeed, always, moral poetry. Maffeo strongly believed that the contemplation of nature should and would lead to God, whereas such things as human beauty only could induce false and even impure thoughts. True, Man had these thoughts but they should be tamed—addressing his nephew, Taddeo, Maffeo wrote: "Il cuor uman, Taddeo, rassembra un mare": 'Man's soul is like the sea',³⁰ tempestuous, always changing, unreliable.

There was, indeed, an ethical-Aristotelian touch to Maffeo's thinking, which one even 'feels' looking at him as he appears as one of the courtiers in Caravaggio's portrait of the *fameglia* of Cardinal Francesco

²⁸ *Poemata*, edition Rome 1635, 247.

²⁹ Cfr. also the poem on the dedication of the canopy by one of Urban's learned courtiers, Lelio Guidiccioni, *Ara Maxima Vaticana* (Rome 1633); the manuscript copy is in: BAV, Ottob. Lat., Vol. 2420.

³⁰ *Poesie toscane* (Rome 1635), sonnet 45.

del Monte. Yet, there were other strains in Maffeo's poems, as indicated above. Some of them derived from the encomiastic tradition of Renaissance and Baroque poetry *largo sensu*: they show a need to participate in the great events of the day, which, however, he interprets from the point of view of Rome, of the Church's interests and, after his accession to the papacy, of his own position in that universal constellation. As such, they deviate from the poetic ideals formulated by a lyrical poet like Marini, notwithstanding the fact that, in his early years, Maffeo used to admire his work. Yet, here, too, the Aristotelian influence is noticeable. For did not Aristotle, in his 'Poetics', claim that poetry, besides dealing with traditional myths, should also cull its themes from real life?

Obviously, Maffeo, as many of his contemporaries, was part of a tradition initiated by St. Thomas Aquinas who had tried to make Aristotle's *Poetika* the basis of the poetry of the Church and of the Christian world. Aquinas having failed to finish his translation and edition of Aristotle, the influence of the *Poetika* on the Christian figurative arts had remained limited till Lorenzo Valla's 1498-edition reintroduced it.³¹

Already in the early years of the 17th century, Maffeo, indeed, seems to have adopted a mildly pro-Aristotelian, anti-Platonic stance in insisting that poetry, instead of inducing passions, was meant to lead to a catharsis, and, thus, to create virtue. As Aristotle argued, contemplating creation, it should rise above the insignificant, the facts, in short above history, or rather: it should signify it and thus reach an understanding of the universal truth, the essential unity of things. In poetry, as in every art, imitation, through rhythm and harmony, will lead to knowledge.³² Poetry will unite the "mythos", creative fantasy, and the "logos", the underlying concept. But to fulfil their function, poems have to be transparent, readable; they have to bring the reader towards an understanding of the final harmony of creation, in short: of God.

Maffeo's poems show that, following Thomas, he, too tries to transform the non-theological essence of Aristotle's views into a theo-anthropocentric concept: Man's ethical and intellectual need of God was to be realised through the observation of beauty, through the creation of art, of poetry, which should be an instrument to teach the mind both through contemplation and through the intellect. However, for all the

³¹ Cfr. for some of the earlier developments: E. Simi Varanelli, 'La riscoperta medievale della poetica di Aristotele e la sua suggestione sulle arti figurative tardoduecentesche', in: A.M. Romanini, ed., *Roma, anno 1300* (Rome 1983), 833-860.

³² Aristotle, *Poetika*, 4, 1148, b7-8.

neo-Aristotelian roots of this poetics, it is not impossible to discern some neo-Platonic influences as well, for Maffeo obviously hoped that somehow a ‘divine furor’ would help the readers of his poetry to be imbued with God’s spirit.

Meanwhile, though it is obvious that Maffeo’s Latin poems were part of a more general current in Italian poetry, his increasingly exclusive devotion to biblical and other religious themes presented as moral lessons set him apart from the mainstream. Nevertheless, he definitely seems to have influenced some of the men in his entourage, though, of course, one should bear in mind that his growing importance and power made him a person whose protection was sought and one whom, therefore, it may have been profitable to follow. Indeed, some of Maffeo’s friends who, when he was crowned with the tiara, became his courtiers, were prolific poets as well, though most of their work was never published.³³

One of them was Virginio Cesarini who, as mentioned above, already in the 1610s admonished the then Cardinal Barberini to use his poetry for its eminent, didactic purpose. It should have a central role in education, and be the instrument *par excellence* to divulge the contents of laws and science.³⁴ Another friend-courtier was Giovanni Ciampoli, who later became the papal poet laureate. He hailed Urban as the ‘sacred hero’, the ‘new Pindar’; already during Maffeo’s cardinalate, he admonished him to use his position as a member of the ‘Senate of Christendom’ to make poetry an instrument for the improvement of society.³⁵ The image is, of course, interesting: papal Rome had succeeded imperial Rome, and the cardinals had taken the place of the one-time senators—as the pope, by right, now was the ‘divine emperor’, the priest-king... Regrettably, Ciampoli’s own works were not immortalised in printed editions, either separately or collectively. One of the reasons was that in the wake of Galilei’s fall from papal favour in the early 1630’s, he, by then secretary of the Papal Briefs, also lost his position, since he had been and continued to be one of the Florentine scholar’s admirers. However, one still can enjoy Ciampoli’s poems, viz. as part of the great musical production of the various Bar-

³³ G. Costanzo, *Critica e Poesia del primo Seicento, I. Gli inediti di Giovanni Ciampoli (1590–1643)* (Rome 1969).

³⁴ Some of the letters of Cesarini to Maffeo Barberini are in: *BAV, BL*, 2189, fols. 1^r–3^v.

³⁵ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3777, fols. 18^r–24^r, and: Vol. 2189, f. 4^v.

berini courts: Giovanni produced the texts for much of the compositions that honoured the many grand moments of Urban's pontificate and of the lives of the various members of the Barberini family—his poem 'Five Swans on the Coronation Day of Pope Urban VIII', set to music for alto, bass, tenor and orchestra was sung in the Sistine Chapel.³⁶ In his manuscript poems,³⁷ and even more in his extensive dialogue on the relationship between poetry and devotion,³⁸ we find many themes dear to Urban—whether they reflect Ciampoli's need to humour his papal patron or, conversely, they were instrumental in shaping Urban's own work is difficult to determine. Nor should one underestimate the possibility of shared ideals: Ciampoli already wrote verses that showed an understanding of Maffeo's feelings while the latter was still 'only' a cardinal.³⁹

The first collected edition

On March 11, 1621, the Divinity School of the Sorbonne permitted a Parisian publisher to print the poems of Maffeo, Cardinal Barberini, onetime papal nuncio to France. Actually, the School's censors told the reader that, in this specific case, permission was, of course, superfluous. Yet, it was the first ever collected edition of the poems of Maffeo Barberini though, in fact, based on a 'pirate' edition that, while not officially authorized by Maffeo, had been published in 1620 at the instigation of the Cardinal's admirer, the Provençal nobleman Nicholas Fabri de Peiresc. Nor had it failed to elicit comments of other French admirers.⁴⁰

It all had begun when, in 1618, Maffeo had sent one of his 'compositions' to his friend Girolamo Aleandro, a learned Humanist frequenting the papal court, asking him to forward it to Peiresc, whose fame among the "litterati" of Europe was great but whom he did not personally know. The ode was in honour of St. Mary Magdalene, the patron saint of Peiresc's beloved Provence. The poem, that, perhaps, had been

³⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3777, fols. 135^r–147^v.

³⁷ Many of Ciampoli's poems are in: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 3647, 3671, 3709, 3710, 3777, 3790, 3786, 3875, 3886, 4003.

³⁸ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4003, fols. 676^r–770^v.

³⁹ E.g. *BAV*, Vat. Lat., Vol. 8658, nr. 6, "Se fra scetri e tesori".

⁴⁰ E.g. the letter in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2047, f. 59^r, of a patrician of Toulon.

written as early as 1611, clearly reflected Barberini's deep-felt emotional relationship to the spirit of her penance.

Delighted by the honour, Peiresc did not hesitate to circulate the poem amongst his Parisian acquaintances. He soon wrote his first letter to Maffeo, telling him of the poem's success both at court and among the scholars of the Sorbonne. Indeed, he had felt free to publish it at his own expense, albeit without giving the author's name. The printed poem also was distributed in Provence and affixed to the saint's painted and sculpted images in various chapels and shrines.⁴¹ Apparently, and, in view of his obvious vanity not surprisingly, Barberini was charmed with Peiresc's gesture. Soon, a correspondence developed, mainly concentrating on the topic of Maffeo's fervent wish to acquire a considerable portion of the saint's relics to sanctify the chapel he had erected for his family in the Roman church of Sant'Andrea della Valle.⁴² In a third letter, Peiresc expressed his willingness to oblige, even reporting he had approached King Louis XIII himself, at St. Germain, to ask him for the necessary orders.

Meanwhile, Cardinal Barberini, as by now he was, also had an eye for the contemporary political situation. Still, this does not necessarily mean that his two great odes of 1619 and 1620,⁴³ the one on San Lorenzo, of Spain, and the other on Saint Louis IX, of France, do not also reveal his reverence for these two men and, more specifically, their virtues: e.g., Saint Louis's crusade, while, in a certain sense, a *topos*, did manage to stir heroic-religious feelings in more than one contemporary breast. The two odes can be dated on the basis of the correspondence between Maffeo and his secretary Francesco Bracciolini—who, incidentally, had written a gigantic poem on the retrieval of the Cross as an allegory on the Church's policy towards the Islamic East, on which Maffeo commented in his own hand.⁴⁴ A prolific poet in his own right, Bracciolini's career developed from a position as young Barberini's free and even somewhat patronizing stylistic adviser in the late 1590's to that of sycophantic collaborator of the powerful cardinal. It reveals, even in the wording of the letters, some of the tragedy of the 'client' in the system of patronage. Bracciolini's tone slowly alters till, in his last letter, he needs to humbly offer his service to the young nephew of his former

⁴¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6502, f. 1^r, Peiresc to Barberini, November 21, 1618.

⁴² See the Prologue to this book.

⁴³ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4022, fols. 98^r, 105^r.

⁴⁴ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3983, fols. 1^r–436^v.

master who has just been elected to the papacy and to whom, for that reason only, he cannot now directly write anymore.⁴⁵

While the same was to happen to Peiresc, yet he managed to retain a far more independent position. After the initial epistolary exchanges with Cardinal Barberini, the tone of his letters changed, with Peiresc assuming the role in which he was to continue for the next twenty years, viz. acting as a self-appointed adviser to Maffeo in matters of scholarship and general learned culture, and using this precious contact to further the career of men known to him.

This showed when Peiresc suggested that, perhaps, Barberini might compose an ode in honour of Saint Louis, which would greatly please the present king who is, of course, the thirteenth of that name. Barberini immediately indicated he would not mind doing so at all. Asking Peiresc for material to base his text on, he was advised to read the life of Louis IX by his contemporary Joinville.⁴⁶ In 1619, Barberini's Ode to Saint Louis was published in Paris. It was then that Peiresc asked permission to publish Barberini's entire oeuvre to date.⁴⁷ In 1620, this enterprise matured. Barberini wrote a preface, and Peiresc asked for some more poems, to make the book 'more proportionate'.⁴⁸

This first, Parisian collection, which included 31 poems, gives a glimpse of the poetry Barberini, at this stage of his career, wanted posterity to remember him for. An analysis shows it gathered poems dating back as far as the 1590's. There is an ode on Pope Clement's happy recovery from one of his periodical bouts of gout, an example of that part of Maffeo's early oeuvre that followed the customary pattern of courtly comments. Customary, also, seem the poems composed to honour the life or work of influential members of the Curia, such as Cardinal Bellarmine, and of personal friends, significantly lauding Maffeo's literary teachers and colleagues such as Cesarini, Chiabrera, Ciampoli and Strozzi.⁴⁹

Although other poems with 'profane' topics are included—about a painting by Guido Reni and about the statue of a golden dragon in the gardens of Cardinal Borghese—most deal with sacred or related sub-

⁴⁵ Bracciolini's letters to Maffeo are in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6459; for the dating of the odes: fols. 98^r, 105^r. The last letter: f. 106^r.

⁴⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6502, fols. 2^{r-v}; 3^{r-4^r}; 7^r.

⁴⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6502, f. 9^r, Peiresc to Barberini, December 3, 1619.

⁴⁸ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6502, fols. 10^{r-11^r}; 16^r, Peiresc to Barberini, April 15 and September 2, 1620.

⁴⁹ *Ill.mi...Maffaei...card. Barberini...Poemata, o.c.*, 28, 67, 46, 49, 51, 53.

jects. There is a series of paraphrases of biblical themes, voiced in such a way that the moral lesson for contemporary life becomes abundantly evident. Also included are the obviously moralistic poems written for his brothers Antonio and Carlo, as well as the ode for young Francesco. Interesting, and probably both politically-motivated and written from sheer horror at the act is the poem on the death of Mary Queen of Scots, described as outright murder⁵⁰—of course, by removing her Catholic rival, the Protestant Elizabeth had consolidated the Reformation both in England and in Scotland, much to the chagrin of Rome.

However, the Pindaric odes on Saint Louis of France and on Mary Magdalene are singled out for specific comment in the introduction, as is the Ode to San Lorenzo, quite obviously written to counterbalance the poem about the French Crusader king, since the papacy was trying hard to avoid taking sides in the war that had only recently broken out between the Houses of Bourbon and Habsburg. Yet, this introduction does not address politics as such but tells the reader that, at last, Rome has a poet again who writes poetry worthy of the high values held by the Christian religion. While the publisher may have given these texts special prominence because they would appeal to his intended readers—the first two would flatter the French, the last one the Spanish—I yet feel it would be wrong to interpret these texts purely as career-serving political poems, only meant to impress the monarchs of France and Spain: they do reflect the general tone of Maffeo's ideas, and of the pope he was now serving as a cardinal.

The first 'papal' edition

It was only to be expected that Maffeo's elevation to the papacy in 1623 would create a new demand for an edition of his poems. Surprisingly, however, no such edition was published, at least not by the presses traditionally controlled by the popes, i.e. the Vatican Typography and the one attached to the Camera Apostolica. The Parisian publisher eagerly took this golden opportunity and produced a second printing of the 1620-edition. This 1623-Paris edition remained the 'standard' one, with its 31 Latin poems, from which derived the editions published in Cologne, in 1626, and Vienna, in 1627.

⁵⁰ *Ill.mi...Maffaei...card. Barberini...Poemata, o.c.*, 57, 58, 69.

However, in 1628, three new editions were published, this time in Italy. The first seems to have copied the Parisian version and was printed in Venice. The second one, enlarged by no less than seventeen poems, originated in Bologna while the third, the most extensive one, came from Codogno. This edition was, in fact, a synthesis of the 1623-Paris edition and the 1628-Bologna one, but added to it were three new texts, bringing the total amount of papal poems now publicly available to 51.⁵¹

It took till 1631 before the first Roman edition appeared, with the Vatican Press. It had been revised and greatly augmented by Urban himself: the number of poems had been increased to a total of 88.⁵² From various manuscripts I have been able to deduce that Urban was aware that, more than ever, he had to choose his words carefully—e.g. in the Maddalena-poem, the word *voluptas* is eliminated, while the term *pudor* is introduced.⁵³ This edition was formally presented as a gift from Urban's *Collegio Romano*. It was a sumptuous production, illustrated with large-scale plates by Bernini and other major artists of the day. More importantly, it had the added benefit of a full metrical apparatus, precisely to facilitate its use in schools—marking this edition as, perhaps, the most propagandistically effective of all of Urban's poetic efforts. For in the same year, a smaller, and therefore supposedly cheaper but yet identical version was published by the press attached to the Apostolic Chamber; this, of course, was the press that usually catered to the people of Rome and of the Papal States and therefore could be instrumental in distributing the book to those teachers who expressed an interest in using it in their classes. Yet, surprisingly, in view of its didactic purpose, this edition shows little systematic composition. The poems are not numbered, nor are they presented thematically. True, the group of paraphrases on the psalms forms the first part, followed by the most important of Urban's various odes, but the rest is an ill-assorted medley of old and new, secular and religious, moralistic and unabashedly political. Why the opportunity to create a truly didactic ensemble was not taken is difficult to fathom.

Though it is obvious the Pope himself took considerable part in the labour involved in producing a meticulously edited definite edition, he

⁵¹ Castagnetti, *o.c.*, Appendix IV.

⁵² Castagnetti, *o.c.*, wrongly counts 83, only.

⁵³ Various manuscripts which contain the Pope's efforts to prepare this edition exist: e.g. *BAV, BL*, Vols. 1757; 2027.

certainly did employ others to help him as well. While it is not easy to determine who were involved, I feel one can discern the critical eye of Lucas Holstenius, the erudite *famigliare* of Urban's nephew Francesco.⁵⁴ This scholar went through the text, correcting points of grammar that, apparently, had slipped from the papal pen, and suggesting that, sometimes, the metre did not correspond with the emphasis of certain words in Greek; perhaps, he even determined the sequence of the poems in the final version. Yet, it seems in all things Urban himself did have the last word.⁵⁵

This first fully authorised edition is of great importance, too, because the Pope himself now chose to publicly explain the principles and purposes underlying his poetry. In a papal brief titled *Poesis probis et piis ornata documentis primaevo decori restituenda*, that would precede the text of all subsequent Roman editions, he again maintained his earlier stance, viz. that poetry should be restored to its pristine quality, turning its back on pagan themes and images and instead inciting to Christian virtues. Still, sometimes it might be necessary to use classical elements to direct the reader to biblical texts and their messages, or to moral examples. But the Cross, not the Laurel, should be the poet's symbol. Moses and David—especially David, poet, prophet and king—should be his examples. Thus, through poetry, the youth of Italy would return to the ancient values.

Not only was the official Roman edition constantly re-issued, it also was constantly enlarged, as the Pope's poetic vein continued to flow. Indeed, almost each new edition contained additional, mostly Latin poems, their number growing from 88 in 1631 to no less than 152 in 1640.⁵⁶ In that year, however, a really new edition came from the presses of the Apostolic Chamber. Its printer-publisher, Andrea Braggiotti, addressing the reader, argued it had become necessary because public demand could not be met, anymore. The new version also boasted a new type.

If one tries to judge the Pope by his own standards, one has to admit that he continued to produce poetry that, at least sometimes, had his moments. In a Christmas poem like *Nasceris almae puer*, the cold

⁵⁴ See chapters III and VI of this book.

⁵⁵ Holste's notes, apparently to be communicated to the Pope through the *Maestro di Camera*, are in: *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 2077, fols. 224^r, sqq.

⁵⁶ Castagnetti, *o.c.*, wrongly counts 144, only.

and the poverty of the night of Christ's birth are eloquently sketched. The dialogue between Christ and his mother, describing the need for God's son to leave his parent, Mary's will to die with him, and her son's express refusal to allow her to do so have a definite impact. And the emotions evoked by the image of Christ on the Cross in the heart and mind of the believer show the full force of Baroque rhetoric and sentiment.

The editions in Italian

Though many of Pope Urban's subjects, both within his States and within his Church, commanded a good deal of Latin, many more obviously did not. Probably therefore, from 1635 onwards, the Roman editions of Urban's Latin poems mostly were followed by editions of his Italian verses as well—their number rising from 73 to 81 in the last, 1640-edition. While, in 1635, these Italian poems are explicitly presented as the Pope's juvenilia, as indicated above the real juvenilia were not included—on the contrary, there are evidently new sonnets denouncing the writing of poetry inspired by impure love. Moreover, the purpose of the poems now published was manifestly didactic, since most are provided with explanatory captions.

All Urban's favourite themes recur: the moral education of the members of his family—various Latin poems for the Pope's brothers and nephews are repeated in their essence, though the wording now is far less complex—, the cult of poverty, expressed in a sonnet on St. Francis, and the prayer-like meditations.⁵⁷

Though Urban may have felt that in producing an Italian edition he might reach a far wider readership, he must have realised that most of his subjects were, in fact, “idioti”, illiterate. Yet, while it is to be doubted whether they had any need for the Pope's rather heavy-handed moralising, many teachers may well have read them to their pupils, thus trying to impart the message.

However, there may have been yet another reason for this Italian edition. Dedicated by the editor-publisher, one Ferranti, to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, it also includes a long biographical sketch of the

⁵⁷ Maffeo Barberini, *Poemata* (Paris 1642), 236; 237; 250; 295 are family sonnets; 294 is the poem on St. Francis.

Pope's life and actions. Of course, various 'official' histories of the reigning pontifex were produced during Urban's lifetime, but most of these were written in Latin.⁵⁸

In Ferranti's Italian life of Urban, the importance of that earlier Barberini poet, the 14th-century Francesco, author of the famous *Documenti d'Amore*, is introduced first, obviously to establish the Pope's poetic antecedents. Then Maffeo's poetic purposes are explained. His poetry has three main aims: it wants to help the reader ask forgiveness for his sins, it wants to help him love God and it wants to help him elevate himself to the heavenly principles. The following 40 pages are devoted to a detailed sketch of Urban's glorious deeds. Their selection perfectly coincides with the ideas and facts described in the poems presented in this Italian edition.

Urban's material liberality and religious zeal are stressed. From the earliest stages of his career, he took care of the poor and oppressed. No wonder that, when Paul V made him a cardinal, he reportedly had said: 'In the elevation of Maffeo Barberini we have elected a successor to St. Peter.' Meanwhile, Maffeo had shown the proper frame of mind in the construction of the chapel devoted to Mary's Assumption in Sant'Andrea, and in the almost papal way he had acted as Cardinal-protector of the Greek and Oriental colleges and of the Congregation of the Propaganda, the papal ministry for the Spreading of the Faith established in 1622. He also had cultivated the learned, and had remained virtuous amidst the intrigues and struggles of the papal court.

And then 'a Swarm of Bees, tinged by the Sun, flew out to announce to the World Honey's happy Age'—a reference to the oft-repeated mythical moment of Maffeo's election to the papacy during the conclave. Now, the world has a pope who is honoured not only by the princes of Europe, but even by the King of Congo and the Emperor of Ethiopia. He has adorned the symbol of his power, the grave of St. Peter, with a mighty canopy. He shows his awareness of the special position in the Church's history of some early benefactors like Constantine, Charlemagne and the Countess Matilda. He takes care of the material and spiritual welfare of his subjects. He has restored the Roman university to its earlier glory, and enlarged the Vatican Library. His concern

⁵⁸ An important one was: S. Simonini, *Silvae Urbanianae, seu Gesta Urbani VIII Pont. Max. Opt.* (Antwerp, Plantin's Printing Office, 1637). Alas, Urban's official biography commissioned by Cardinal Francesco remained unpublished: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 4730–4739: A. Nicoletti, *Della Vita di Papa Urbano Ottavo e Istoria del Suo Pontificato*.

for the spiritual welfare of the entire world is shown by his missionary policy and the publishing activities of the Propaganda Congregation. Especially the Arab world has his attention, as is shown by the special congregation that convenes to discuss its affairs no less than twice a week. Indeed, his greatest care is the 'sacred enterprise' that he tries to realize with the help of the Christian princes, the war against the Infidel, the theme of several of his poems as well. To that end, too, he constantly promotes peace in the Christian world.

Thus, Ferranti's introductory text would have given an Italian reader who commanded only the vernacular a clear impression of the ideas and actions of the Pope whose poems were before him. Moreover, his edition admirably presents the Pope's poems. A table gives both the Latin and the Italian "incipits", as well as a one-line summary of each poem's content or meaning. The translations are competent and the commentaries themselves are extensive. If, as I assume, the edition was an initiative of Francesco Barberini, he must have been well satisfied by it. Whether read in silence by the children in the Papal States or aloud to a classroom audience, the Pope's biography and the Pope's poems may well have merged into a vision of Christian life lived to the full—the perfect propaganda for religion and the role of the papacy in it.

Translations

Although, besides the Italian translation by Ferranti, and the Carducci-edition of the Italian version of the Pindaric odes, no translated edition of a significant portion of the Pope's oeuvre ever appeared, many individual poems were translated into various languages.

The single, most numerous group consists of Spanish translations made by Gabriele del Corral which, however, were never published.⁵⁹ As indicated above, several of the odes that specifically dealt with themes dear to the national feelings of France were, almost as a matter of course, translated into French, and printed separately, such as the ode to Mary Magdalene, published in 1618, and the long Latin poem on Saint Louis, which appeared in French in 1625.

The fact that the hortatory ode for young Francesco was translated into Greek by the famous Greek scholar Leone Allacci can, I think,

⁵⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 1864. Although I have not been able to trace a published version, in several manuscripts 1627 is mentioned as publication date.

be explained only because of Urban's and Cardinal Francesco's great interest in, and relations with, the world of the Greek Christians. If so, it served a propagandistic aim. Indeed, when requested to give a judgement, one of the Inquisition's censors wrote that it definitely should be published.⁶⁰

Somewhat more surprisingly, the ode on Louis IX of France was translated into Greek, too, by F. Morel, and published in a separate, bilingual edition as well. This may have been another initiative meant to strengthen the ties with the Christian world of the Near East, more specifically in preparation for the holy war which Urban wanted the monarchs of France—and Spain—to wage against the Infidel, as Saint Louis had done several centuries earlier.

*Contemporary explanations and interpretations:
the poetics and perils of poetic propaganda*

As the years went by, the number of printed editions of the papal poems increased. Obviously, the two main presses of Rome, that of the Vatican and of the Apostolic Chamber, re-issued their editions, quite probably on express papal orders but also because a genuine demand for them must have sprung up all over the Roman Catholic world. This is borne out by the fact that in 1634 the famous Antwerp printing and publishing firm of Plantin brought out its own version of the Roman collection of 1631, which then was reprinted several times. Plantin, or rather his son-in-law Balthasar Moretus had acquired the privilege given to Andrea Bragiotti, the printer-publisher of the Apostolic Chamber. The Antwerp-edition was dedicated to the Pope's nephew, Cardinal Francesco. A portrait of the Pope was included, as well as his Brief introducing the Roman edition.

However, the two most important editions of the Pope's poems were the one devoted to his odes, by Giulio Cesare Capaci, published in Naples in 1633⁶¹—which offers both a paraphrase and an interpretation, with extensive reference to parallels especially in the Classics—and a more extensive selection made by Henry Dormeuil in 1643. They are important precisely because they include commentaries and, more-

⁶⁰ *BAV*, Vat. Lat., Vol. 1075, f. 4.

⁶¹ Preparations for this collection can be found in: *BAV*, *BL*, Vol. 2152, f. 50^r, sqq.; and 2156, 1^r–26^v.

over, because these commentaries connect the corpus of Urban's poetry to his world view, stressing, on the one hand, the links with religion and, hence, with moral life, and, on the other hand, with politics.

No other commentaries were published during Urban's lifetime. The Italian one prepared by Tommaso di Leva for publication in 1639 remains in manuscript, only. It seems to stress the didactic value of, especially, a number of the Italian poems, and may have been meant for use in schools.⁶² Also buried in the archives are the comments produced by Magno Perni, a learned theologian from Anagni. He was a prolific author in the field of Canon Law, an even more prolific sermonizer, as well as the biographer of Urban's nephew Antonio junior and the writer of a voluminous guide book for those who visited Rome in the Holy Year 1625.⁶³ On top of that he produced a number of comments on Urban's Marian hymns besides extolling Urban's rewritten version of the Breviary, and some of the Pope's moralistic poems;⁶⁴ he even manufactured a tract, of more than a 1000 folios, on the *Ode hortatoria* for Francesco, setting it against the background of some 30 other pertinent papal poems as well as placing it within the wider context of general learning.⁶⁵

By far the most interesting of the unpublished commentaries was the Latin one by Tommaso Campanella (1568–1659). He was a Calabrian friar of the Dominican Order whom, despite or because of his many original ideas—that, basically, favoured an anti-Aristotelian attitude towards the nature and study of the cosmos—many considered a heretic. He had gained Urban's confidence through his alleged ability to influence the course of the stars and, thus, to favourably influence the Pope's future as well. Campanella's text has a significance all its own.⁶⁶

In 1627, the notorious Calabrese started working on the poems, producing a first set of comments in May 1628. Campanella's ideas

⁶² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3653.

⁶³ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3300.

⁶⁴ His texts are in: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 3256, 3262, 3293, 3294, 3298.

⁶⁵ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3295, fols. 1^r–1184^v.

⁶⁶ G. Formichetti, 'Campanella a Roma: I "Commentaria" ai Poemata di Urbano VIII', in: *Studi Romani*, 30/3 (1982), 325–339; Idem, ed., *Campanella critico letterario. I "Commentaria" ai Poemata di Urbano VIII (Codex Barberinus Latinus 2037)* (Rome 1983). Also: L. Bolzoni, 'I Commentari di Campanella ai Poemata di Urbano VIII. Un uso infedele del commento umanistico', in: *Rinascimento*, Series II, 28 (1988), 113–132, and Idem, 'Il modo di commentare alla fine dell'Umanesimo', in: *Annuario della Scuola Normale di Pisa, Classe di Lettere e Filologia*, 19/1 (1989), 289–311.

at this time, especially as expounded in the introduction, were thoroughly neo-Platonic, specifically as received through the texts of the Florentine philosopher Marsilio Ficino.⁶⁷ For him, the poet was the link between God and the world, between the eternal and the ephemeral. The essence of life is death. Thus, poetry should help the reader to ‘interiorise’—Campanella’s neologism—this notion, which would bring him to the knowledge of God. Meditation, helped by poetry, would lead not to the experience of nothingness, as Indian philosophers hold, but to the idea that science, profane knowledge, yet though essential to understand creation has its limits; this would be the beginning of true knowledge, of divine wisdom.⁶⁸ Hence, the poet’s task was immensely important, a moral obligation of the first order. Poetry should not imitate, as Aristotle demanded, but rather create the verisimilitude of truth. A poet should not be an enchanter, spinning the reader a web of words. Metaphors only kept the reader from recognising the ultimate reality. To bring the reader to the desired truth, poetic ‘furor’ should be prophetic ‘furor’ as well. But though ‘the aim of poetry is to teach the things as they ideally are’, this yet may be done by way of delectation.⁶⁹

In his commentaries, Campanella unabashedly rearranged the Pope’s poems to suit his own neo-Platonic ideas. With an avalanche of encyclopaedic learning, he tried to reason away Urban’s mitigated use of ancient mythology, his Christian adaptation of Classical allegory, hoping to convince the reader the Pope actually was a Platonist rather than an Aristotelian. Nor was he entirely wrong in interpreting Urban’s mind in this vein. Urban had often condemned the use of mythological images, more specifically naming such classical myths as the stories of Phoebus and Daphne, Orpheus and Eurydice, Jupiter and Danae, as the main causes of the decline of poetry’s moral power. Consequently, Campanella thought he had found a kindred spirit. Urban, Florentine by birth, well acquainted with neo-Platonism despite his Jesuit, Aristotelian training, was a patron of the new, experimental sciences, a long-time friend of Galilei’s and of many Galileans.⁷⁰ Moreover, the

⁶⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 1918, f. 4^v.

⁶⁸ These notions are expounded in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2037, another volume of Campanella’s commentaries, edited by: Formichetti, *Campanella critico letterario*, *o.c.*

⁶⁹ See Campanella’s comments in L. Bolzoni’s edition of one of the manuscript volumes containing his texts, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2048: L. Bolzoni, ed., *Tommaso Campanella, Opere Letterarie* (Florence 1977), 665–889, specifically 786–787, 812, 828, 834.

⁷⁰ Urban’s contacts with Galilei, from 1611 onwards, are thoroughly documented, latest by: P. Redondi, *Galileo Eretico* (Florence 1983).

Pope often referred to the sciences in his poems. Might he not be seeing the world as Campanella saw it? Campanella's world was one in which true knowledge was based on the *res* instead of the *verba*. Nature was its source, rather than books claiming the authority of received wisdom. Words existed only to realize things. In his introduction, Campanella claimed that discoveries such as the ones of Columbus and Galilei ranked equal with Holy Scripture as sources of knowledge and interpretation about God's creation.⁷¹

How did Campanella try to achieve his goal? A single example is illustrative both of his intentions and his methods. Commenting on the poem titled *Vera sapientia mortis meditatio*, which includes the following passage:

Hospites sumus hic in orbe; non hic
Nobis patria permanens: inani
Laetamur specie boni.⁷²

Campanella writes:

Pythagoras, Trismegistus atque Plato animorum immortalitate deprehendentes dissidiumque inter Animos atque Corpora argumentati sunt, Animum non esse proprio in domicilio, sed quasi in carcere, et quoniam non injuste id evenisse Providentia universalis demonstrabat, non nisi culpa aliquando admisse tribuere conati sunt. Et quidem animos immortales esse naturalibus rationibus innotescit, quarum in Atheismo triumphato adduximus multas efficaces. Non esse autem in Patria ex eo planum est, quod Anima corporis terminis vinculisque non tenetur, sed supra Caelum, extra Mundum sine fine extendiunt, intelligendo appetendoque, ut mirum sit quomodo tanta amplitudo in pugillo Cerebri Claudi petuerit. Igitur si non ex corpore dependet, nec ex elementis, quippe que longe transcendit, consequens est, ut extra Patria sibi convenientem, sit solis ergo epicuraeis Animus non peregrinari, sed nasci in corpore, et in corpore vivere, ac mori visum est. At licet Origines Platoni assentiat, haud tamen asserendum propter anterioria peccata animas in corpore detrusas cum id ignorens, vindicta /118^r/ autem notitia expetat, teste Homero et Aristotele. Sed in agone et probationem, utque coronentur si legitime certaverint credimus sacris revelationibus in corpore creatas, e corporibus tandem solvendas, iterumque coniungendas, cum comediae universalis finis erit. De quibus alibi. Hic solummodo declaratam volumus naturali argumento ne dum fide teneri, animas humanas in inferiori mundo pererinari.⁷³

⁷¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 1918, f. 10^{r-v}.

⁷² Maffeo Barberini, *Poemata* (Paris, 1642), 103–104.

⁷³ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2037, f. 117^{r-v}, 118^r.

Thus, Campanella sought to combine his own explicit poetics⁷⁴ and his philosophical notions with the ideas he wanted to recognise in Urban's poems, even though these were so implicitly voiced as to escape such a fitting interpretation. Actually, as he implied when, at a later stage, he referred to public demand for his edition, he hoped to use his commentaries on Urban's poems as the vehicle to impose his own ideas on the youth of the Papal States and, indeed, of all Christendom. Not surprisingly, his elaborate explications were didactically structured. Each of them began with a preface, giving the general gist of the text; it was followed by a comment on the grammatical and metrical aspects of the poem, 'for the use of minors'; then, the construction proper was analysed; and, last but certainly not least, a philosophical comment 'for the use of adults' was included—by far the longest part of the entire text. Thus, what had been a seemingly simple distich in the hands of Urban might well elicit some nine pages of Campanellian philosophical interpretation.⁷⁵

While Campanella's interpretations may seem excessive, they yet reflected a more general cultural climate that, however, soon was to change.

In the very period in which Campanella was toiling away at his commentaries, on October 31, 1629, Lucas Holstenius, the German librarian of the Pope's most powerful nephew, ascended the rostrum in the hall where the Roman *Accademia degli Humoristi* gathered, to deliver, in the presence of two eminent cardinals, a learned Latin address on Plato and poetry.

According to Holste, the 'divine philosopher' was not an enemy of poetry as some people argued on the basis of a one-sided reading of the *Republic*. He rather was an enemy of poetry produced for the wrong reasons, of poets who used their words to instil impure thoughts in their readers' minds. Careful scrutiny of the *Phaedo* and the *Timaios*, however, revealed that the Prince of the Philosophers strongly believed in that true poetry which showed the "furor divina". The poets who wrote that kind of poetry were no mere authors, they were the priestly intermediaries between God, the greatest poet, who created the soul of the world and the souls of Man, and his creatures, who had to

⁷⁴ P. Tuscano, *Poetica e poesia di Tommaso Campanella* (Milan 1969).

⁷⁵ E.g. *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 2037, f. 120^v, sqq. The distichon is: "luce fugat tenebra, cera dum vestit ab igne / ac censas faculas, aemula solis apis"; the philosophical part of the commentary is on fols. 122^v–126^v.

be liberated from the chains of the flesh to regain their origin, to become one with God again. Poets, real poets helped their readers to use their mind's eye to see the real things, to return into themselves and, through contemplation, reach God, the universe—for 'that which the Platonists term the life according to the spirit, our people call the mystic contemplation of God and things divine' -

praesertim cum de Deo rebusque divinis sine lumine loqui Pythagorae symbolum vetit: et ipse Plato fores poeticas sine furore Musarum adeundas negit, et Socrates de furore amatorio dicturus, non nisi sacro fuore correptus rem adeo arduam aggreditur.

No human power, but God's help alone allowed the reader to escape from the imprisonment of his body, and realize, in himself, the harmony of the cosmos. Poetry, by making man look at the examples of perfection, inducing him to imitate them, was the very instrument to effectuate this process.⁷⁶

Holste was a prudent man, though. Not even once did he allude to the Pope's poems, let alone openly interpret them along the lines of the neo-Platonic vision of poetry's function he had just revealed. And, of course, all this was a proposition, only, he said. His audience would have to judge. Alas, we do not know how the *Humoristi* reacted. Still, the general drift of Holste's thoughts seems to reflect the intellectual climate of the papal court during the last years of the second decade of the 17th century.

In yet another discourse, for which a draft has been preserved, Holste reasoned it did not really matter if one defined Man, with the 'divine Plato', as spirit, only, or, with others, assumed that the body served the spirit: the thing that mattered was that the products of the mind were Man's most essential properties, determining his immortality.⁷⁷ One more text found among Holste's papers, though his authorship is not certain, also reasons along clear neo-Platonic and, moreover, neo-Pythagorean lines. The orator explains to his audience in a *Laus Boreae* that in Plato's time the tenet of Pythagoras was taught, which held that the souls, before descending into the body, into matter, were particles of the Divine Spirit; they filled the spheres of the cosmos, creating, in their course, the sweet harmony of cosmic music. After

⁷⁶ *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 3072, fols. 61^r-71^v.

⁷⁷ *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 3072, fols. 72^r-79^r: "De selectioribus compositionibus academicis asservandis ac publicandis dissertatio".

they descended into the body, the harmony was destroyed. Hence, the spirit's, Man's, only wish was to return to its origin, to this harmony.⁷⁸

Meanwhile, when Urban read Campanella's introduction to his poems, he must have been unpleasantly surprised to see that, among other things, the Calabrese philosopher proclaimed the Pope the defender of Galilei's use of the Copernican heliocentric theory—though he himself had been just that, in his own 1622-defense of Galilei. In his commentaries, too, Campanella stressed the affinity between Urban's ideas and those of the famous scientist. Thus, in dissecting the poem *Vera sapientia mortis meditatio*, Campanella elaborates extensively on the distance between the earth and the sun, and on the course of the planets, even citing the proofs offered by the Brahmins of India.⁷⁹

Now, the Inquisition had allowed Galilei's version of heliocentrism as a working hypothesis as early as 1620. Indeed, at that time, the then Cardinal Maffeo Barberini had appreciated it as such.⁸⁰ Moreover, he and Galilei had become friends. However, by the end of the 1620's, the general mood in at least part of the Church's leading circles had changed, and Galilei's theories were deemed dangerous, though less so for their macrocosmic implications than for their bearing on the nature and structure of matter and its (im)possible mutations—in short, for its bearing on the Church's central tenet of transubstantiation. Soon the Jesuits, who had long been gaining power in the Curia, decided to make Galilei their scapegoat.

For these views about the world and Man as intrinsically material clashed with that of the Church. Consequently, Campanella was asked to rewrite some of his commentaries. In June 1628, the rewritten version was ready. More so, in July 1629, permission to publish was granted by the papal censor. But publication did not follow.

To what extent Urban's prudent, circumspect nephew, Francesco, felt he should not condone the publication of Urban's poems with Campanella's specific Galilean-Pythagorean interpretation, is arguable.

⁷⁸ BAV, BL, Vol. 3072, fols. 103^r–1110^r. Cfr. BL, Vol. 1846, fols. 25^r–29^r. In both volumes, the authorship of Holste is questioned.

⁷⁹ BAV, BL, Vol. 2037, fols. 74^v–118^v.

⁸⁰ Barberini to Galilei, August 28, 1620, in: A. Favara, ed., *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, XIII. *Carteggi* (Florence 1903), 48–49.

Though Campanella's Copernican vision of the cosmos was far less explicit than Galilei's, traditional elements in the Curia deemed these views unwise in view of their policy to strengthen Rome's authority against the world of the Reformation, where many argued that these supposedly Roman ideas were proof of the papacy's perversion. The very fact that Campanella, too, held views of the essentially material nature of the universe and thus threatened the Church's central dogma, sealed the fate of his comments.

The monk, rather foolishly, told one of his friends, the nobleman-scholar Federigo Cesi, that the Pope himself had confided to him that the condemnation of Galilei's work 'was not our intent; if it had been our decision, this decree would not have been made'.⁸¹ He also tried to frighten the Pontiff, telling him that a number of important Germans, on the brink of conversion through his efforts, had thought better of their decision when the news of Galilei's trial and its implications dawned upon them. This was, probably, counter-productive. The Pope, afraid he himself might fall under suspicion of harbouring Copernican and, worse, Pythagorean and neo-Platonic views, resignedly accepted the fact that the Campanella-edition of his poems was not to be after all. Nevertheless, he may well have regretted it, for though people did, and still do feel Campanella's ideas were, perhaps, rather too far-ranging, they were all-encompassing, encyclopaedic, and the inclusion of Urban's poems in such a vast worldview may well have tickled the Pope's obvious vanity. At the same time, news of Campanella's hold over the Pope through his astrological experiments⁸² was made public by his enemies, in a cleverly-staged defamation campaign.⁸³ Soon, the Pope and Cardinal Barberini helped Campanella to take exile in France.

Meanwhile, however, especially after having read Urban's own introduction to the first Roman, 1631-edition of the poems, Campanella had implored the Pope to allow him to yet publish his commentaries, arguing that all schools, scholars, and, hence, librarians and booksellers

⁸¹ Benedetto Castelli to Galilei, March 16, 1630, in: Galilei, *Opere*, XIV (Firenze 1904), 87–88.

⁸² See chapter VIII of this book.

⁸³ *Ibidem*.

were asking for them.⁸⁴ Even though permission was withheld, he continued to work on his text that, however, remained unpublished till the 20th century.

It is interesting to see how Campanella proposed to achieve his pedagogical end. He had planned to use his contacts with the religious Orders of the Somascs and the Scolopians, whose goal it was to bring culture to the common people through their *scuole pie*. With the founder of the Scolopians, Father Giuseppe Colasanzio, he shared the ideal of popular education, of a mission that would truly change society.⁸⁵ Indeed, he thought bringing wisdom to the people through science, philosophy and art should be the state's, and hence the prince's first aim. In 1630, he addressed a memorandum to Urban stressing the need to introduce proper schooling in the Papal States down to the village level, where reading, writing and religion should be taught, and where the essential findings of science and scholarship, abridged for popular use, should be introduced. Yet, his requests to gain admittance to the Pope were refused.⁸⁶

Some ten years later, in 1641, the *Prodromus* to Henry Dormeuil's projected three volume, commented edition was published. In the end, only one volume did appear, obviously because of Urban's death in 1644. Yet, it is a fascinating, indeed a revealing text that can be combined with the manuscript sections that remain in the archives.

The author was a learned cleric from Liège, a close friend of the influential Lucas Holstenius,⁸⁷ like the latter, he became part of the entourage of Cardinal Francesco, to whom he dedicated his edition.⁸⁸

Dormeuil likens Urban's poetics to those of his friend, the Dutch poet-scholar Daniel Heinsius, who holds that, according to Plato, true

⁸⁴ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2048, f. 40^r. The commentary Campanella sent is on fols. 42^r–121^v.

⁸⁵ There is discussion on this point. It is argued by L. Amabile, *Fra' Tommaso Campanella ne' Castelli di Napoli*, in *Roma ed in Parigi. Narrazione con molti documenti e con opuscoli del Campanella inediti* (Naples 1887), 304, but somewhat countered by G. Calò, 'Campanella e gli Scolopi. A proposito dell'Apologia delle Scuole Pie', in: *Rendiconti della Real Accademia dei Lincei*, Scienze Morali, Series VI, XI (1935), 403–427.

⁸⁶ The text, and the letter, are in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2048. Cfr. L. Firpo, ed., 'Tommaso Campanella, Discorsi universali del governo ecclesiastico', in: L. Firpo, ed., *Scritti scelti di Giordano Bruno e Tommaso Campanella* (Turin 1965), 486–487.

⁸⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2177, fols. 54–105 contains their correspondence, from 1629 to 1645.

⁸⁸ Although there is a manuscript dedication to one Joseph d'Adiacet, the promising only son of the count of Castelvillano: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2037, 139^r.

philosophy is poetry and true poetry cannot escape philosophizing. Thus, like Campanella, Dormeuil, too, insists that Urban's poetry does not rely on the far less satisfying poetics of Aristotle, least so in its primary function: poetry, as Urban, with Plato, understands it, is a didactic instrument.⁸⁹ Rather naughtily, in view of the Jesuits' known predilection for all thoughts Aristotelian, the Liège-canon stresses the fact that the *Societas Iesu* itself has adopted the papal poems for its educational purposes, using them precisely because of their happy combination of piety and doctrine. These sacred poems, with their sacred *furor* so dear to Plato, will help their readers to gain victory over the evils which constantly threaten them in their moral and religious life.⁹⁰

Dormeuil shows a clear understanding of the function of Urban's poetry in its very structure: the poems are presented in a deliberate order, to enhance their impact in the process of reading. It encompasses both the Latin and the Italian compositions, up to the ones most recently published in the official, Roman versions. However, it opens with a great and very interesting poem not published before, in which Urban uses the Vatican basilica as the ideal *locus* which enables him to poetically sketch the history of the Church and the papacy, and claim the latter's primary role, ending on a rather combative note explaining that the Church, founded on the solid Petrine rock, does not fear the hostile forces of darkness.⁹¹ Also, Dormeuil's comments are varied, and extensive: they provide details about the persons mentioned as well as about the philosophical and religious background. They explain the arcane allegories and symbols as well.

In short, it is, indeed, a pity that Dormeuil's work was not published in its entirety. Not only does it show that Urban's poetic work—like most poetry—could be interpreted in various ways. It also shows that, perhaps, the cultural climate had not changed as drastically as the Galilei-conviction has led both contemporaries and later generations believe.⁹² Indeed, Dormeuil's commentaries did not avoid a neo-

⁸⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2037, f. 136^r sqq. contains the introductory remarks. On f. 139^r, sqq., Dormeuil enters into the resemblance with Plato. Cfr. also: H. Dormeuil, *In Maphaei SRE cardinalis Barberini nunc Urbani PP VIII Poemata Henrici Dormali Prodromus* (Rome 1641).

⁹⁰ *Dormeuil*, o.c., 41–54.

⁹¹ *Dormeuil*, o.c., 70sqq.

⁹² See also Chapter VIII of this book, on the Castelli-case.

Platonic interpretation but were more circumspect in dealing with those elements in Urban's poems in which Campanella—unwisely and, also, often unwarrantedly—had insisted finding a Pythagorean, materialist vision of the cosmos.

Words and images: illustrating the Pope's poems

Due to the great length of Urban's pontificate, in the 1620s and 1630s at least in Rome the 'unity of the visual arts' that is often posed as the essential characteristic of Baroque culture manifested itself both to contemporaries and to posterity in what often seems an excessively strong Barberini vein. In whatever form of visual representation, the family emblem returns, almost smothering the papal capital and the Papal States with the three heraldic insects that may or may not have been bees from the beginning. Indeed, they may have been wasps, originally—it is difficult to determine their exact nature from the evidence of seals and carved armorials predating the Barberini's Roman ascent under the aegis of Maffeo. But whatever their origin, from the beginning of the 17th century, Barberini bees were given pride of place.

The origins of the bee as an emblematic sign have been discussed *ad nauseam*.⁹³ I will not add my own shilling to this already over heavy scholarly sack, but for noting two points that seem to have escaped many researchers. In the 16th and 17th century, the Jesuits adapted an age-long, secular tradition of bee emblems to their own purposes, giving them a specific religious and moral-philosophical slant.⁹⁴ Their imagery centred around the Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Lord, the epitome of chastity who was likened to the bee, her womb to the hive. Honey could thus become the dew of heaven, Divine Wisdom, that should inspire princes and rulers both temporal and spiritual—most of all, of course, that perfect fusion of the two, the pope, the

⁹³ Still important the survey by: W. Robert-Tornow, *De Apium Mellisque apud Veteres Significatione et Symbolica et Mythologica* (Berlin 1893).

⁹⁴ See: R. Dimler, 'The Bee-topos in the Jesuit Emblem Book: Themes and Contrast', in: A. Adams, A.J. Harper, eds., *The Emblem in Renaissance and Baroque Europe. Tradition and Variety* (Leiden 1992), 229–246. Dimler, however, fails to even mention the Barberini case.

keeper of the *sacra monarchia*.⁹⁵ What with Urban's early links with the Jesuits⁹⁶ as well as his great love for the Immaculate Virgin who was, indeed, worthy to have generated Christ, Divine Wisdom incarnate, the origin of the profusion of bees that now began to swarm over Rome seems clear: its manifold possibilities for emblematical propaganda simply had to be exploited.

Another point that is often overlooked is the extremely fortunate circumstance that both in Maffeo's own generation and in the next there were, indeed, three Roman Barberini brothers.⁹⁷ This gave visual propaganda an extra edge in terms of signification. Indeed, even in the illustrations that adorned the various editions of the Pope's poems it could be used to good effect, not least because the poet himself composed several poems that either were addressed to the three Barberini brothers or the three nephews, or to other exemplary threesomes who could be taken as their ideological or moral predecessors.

The first illustrated edition of Urban's poems was the Roman one of 1631. Its frontispiece was engraved by the French artist Claude Mellan (1598–1688) after a design by Gianlorenzo Bernini, showing David—obviously to link the poet-king with the poet-pope—wrestling with a lion, his harp thrown aground. The 1634-edition produced in Antwerp by Balthasar Moretus also has a magnificent though more problematic frontispiece. The engraving is based on a design by Peter Paul Rubens who obviously was paraphrasing Bernini. But whereas Bernini, and Mellan, showed a youthful, beardless David who, having laid aside his lyre, is at grips with a lion whose mouth he opens to allow a swarm of bees to escape, Rubens's engraving shows an older man, probably Samson, who, returning to the carcass of the lion which he has killed, finds a swarm of bees filling its mouth already. Yet, in Rubens's design, too, the lyre is prominently present, although it was not amongst Samson's usual attributes.

Should we assume that the painter meant the readers to think of physical strength, or rather the force of arms—which the Pope particularly needed in these years of international war—as being the more

⁹⁵ Cfr. A. Buoncompagni, *La Sacra Monarchia. Panegirico della coronazione di N. Signore Papa Urbano Ottavo* (Rome 1623).

⁹⁶ Cfr. M. Fumaroli, 'Cicero Pontifex Romanus: la tradition rhétorique du Collège Romain et les principes inspireurs du mécénat des Barberini', in: *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome (Moyen Age et Temps Modernes)*, 90 (1978), 797–835.

⁹⁷ Obviously, the three Barberini who had moved to Rome considered themselves a unity, despite the fact that other brothers remained behind in Florence.

effective when combined with the sweeter forces of Apollo, or rather David, who sang the praises of God, just as the Pope, through his poems, enticed his audience to act as peacefully as the Church prescribed and thus in the end would eliminate the need of force? Perhaps, but one may think of yet another identification: one of the cartoons designed by Pietro da Cortona for a series of Barberini tapestries illustrating the *Life of Constantine* seems to have shown the emperor struggling with a lion, too.⁹⁸ Obviously, the relationship between the Pope and the first Christian emperor was continually stressed in all kinds of papal propaganda manifestations because the legal basis of Rome's sovereignty over the Papal States was precisely the so-called Donation of Constantine, a document still widely cited though its falsehood had been established already. The table of contents is followed by an engraved rendering of Bernini's portrait of Urban. Another plate shows three bees in the rather strange act of ploughing. The text says: 'from an ancient gem', and explains, rather cryptically: 'highest rule, sown fields of cultivated land, production of honey: these three symbolize these greater things'. And indeed, amongst Cardinal Francesco's prized possessions was an antique gem cut with this image. Its source seems to be a passage from the fourth book of Virgil's *Georgics*; the caption symbolically states the fact that precisely because the three Barberini nephews together hold the three main offices of the "Patrimonium Petri" and the "Ecclesia Romana"—chamberlain, chancellor and general—they guarantee the prosperity of State and Church.

In a way, the most important illustrated collection was to have been the three-volume Dormeuil-edition of 1643. The one volume published is absolutely covered with bees, either in swarms or, more often, in the ubiquitous threesomes. To judge by the many captions, Dormalius was of the opinion that bees, especially as a triad, could represent well nigh everything positive: they link Heaven to Earth, bring Peace, accompany the Muses and, of course, symbolize the Barberini who have restored Rome's ancient power as an arbiter in Christendom.⁹⁹ Moreover, the book is riddled with other emblems as well. Most of these also were part of the regular Barberini repertoire as codified, already in 1623, by G. Ferro in his *Teatro d'Imprese*, printed in Venice. Whereas according to Ferro the bee could stand for resurrection and apotheosis, resulting in immortality through virtue, the sun could be

⁹⁸ Lavin, *Seventeenth-century documents and Inventories of Art*, *o.c.*, 227.

⁹⁹ Dormalius, *o.c.*, 173.

used to illustrate either Divine Wisdom, or Christ's resurrection;¹⁰⁰ the lion would symbolize strength; the laurel, often shown as a tree, represented virtue.¹⁰¹ Obviously, these *impres*e lent themselves to endless combination and, hence, to near-endless speculation. Of course, one may well wonder whether the often intricate meanings read into these allegories and emblems by present-day scholars really were understood by any but the most astute contemporary observers.¹⁰²

Words and sounds: the music of papal poetry

Music was an integral part of the way Baroque culture sought to express itself. Various members of the Barberini family were true music lovers: the costly and gigantic opera house—it held no less than three-thousand seats—constructed alongside the Barberini Palace was no mere extravaganza of cultural propaganda, and Barberini patronage of composers and other musicians went far beyond the dictates of court culture. Daily routine both in Urban's rather sober household at the Vatican and in his nephews' far more sumptuous establishments in the Palazzo della Cancelleria—Francesco's official residence—and the family palaces at the Via dei Giubbonari and, later, at Quattro Fontane was spiced with numerous moments of musical entertainment.

One of the Pope's courtiers, Giulio Rospigliosi, provided the libretti for a series of operas that were staged for all kinds of festive occasions, such as when the imperial ambassador Prince Hans Ulrich von Eckemberg visited Rome in 1632. In one of the rooms of the new Barberini palace, a special performance was given of the recently completed drama "Sant'Alessio".¹⁰³ Set to music by Stefano Landi, it was one of the many texts that, through Rospigliosi's pen, reflected the specific ideas of Pope Urban on the didactic and moralistic function of vocal music, too: musical drama should not wallow in pagan heroism or arcane mythology, but rather stress the need to leave the wicked world in pursuit of Christian virtues. Such tragic figures as Saint Alexis proved the proper protagonists of these elaborately staged pieces.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ According to Scott, *o.c.*, they even represented the eternal rule of the Barberini.

¹⁰¹ Ferro, *o.c.*, 651–654.

¹⁰² The visual side of Barberini propaganda is treated with great insight by: Scott, *o.c.*, 193–197.

¹⁰³ The first (CD-)recording of the Sant'Alessio has been produced in 1995.

¹⁰⁴ M. Murata, *Operas for the Papal Court, 1631–1668* (Chicago 1975), 2–37, as well as: Fr.

A pope who attached such importance to the relationship between word and music for the greater clarity of the religious message could not but show an interest in the principal instrument that was used in this context, the poetical and musical setting of the *Breviarium et Hymnarium Romanum*, used all over the Catholic world. Thus we find Urban pressing for the completion and final revision of the Breviary and the Hymnal—that had been under way since the pontificate of Clement VIII—according to Tridentine tenets. To that end, he had written many hymn-texts himself, both for the feast of Easter, and to celebrate the feasts of the Virgin Mary, whose role he particularly stressed.¹⁰⁵ He also appointed himself to a committee amongst whose other members he selected four learned and poetically competent Jesuits, viz. Famiano Strada, Tarquinio Galluzzi, both professors of rhetoric at the *Collegio Romano*, Geronimo Petrucci, and the prefect of the *Collegio Germanico*, Carlo Sarbiewski, the latter a very able Latin poet in his own right.¹⁰⁶

In March 1629, their proposals were put before the Congregation of Rites¹⁰⁷ and, of course, accepted. In the same year, the Hymnal was printed, in three different formats.¹⁰⁸ The revision of the Breviary took another three years. Incorporating the Hymnal, it was published in 1631. Urban expressed his joy over the completion of this enterprise, first contemplated by Sixtus V in 1588, in the Bull *Divinam Psalmodyam* of January 1631. In it, he explained the need to present the faithful with a text that could easily be sung and, thus, would facilitate their emotional contemplation of God; moreover, it had been expurgated of the many mistakes that had crept into it over the past centuries.

For easy use, the revisers had divided the hymns in five groups. The first, including such venerable, ancient texts as the *Te Deum*, the *Ave Maris Stella* and the *Victimae Paschali Laudes*, had been left intact. A sec-

Hammond, *Music and Spectacle in baroque Rome. Barberini Patronage under Urban VIII* (New Haven 1994), 201–202; 209–212. See, also, Chapter IV of this book.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *BAV, BL*, Vols. 3256, 3264, 3296, 3298, 3299, 3305: the manuscript texts of a series of commentaries and explanations by Magno Perni to Urban's hymns and the new Breviary and Hymnal.

¹⁰⁶ J. Warszawski, *Dramat Rzymski* (Rome 1984); J. IJsewijn, 'Scrittori Latini Romani dal Barocco al Neoclassicismo', in: *Studi Romani*, 36 (1988), 229–249.

¹⁰⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vols. 761–763 contain the documentation.

¹⁰⁸ *Hymni Breviarii Romani Sanctiss. Domini Nostri Urbani VIII Iussu, et Sacrae Rituum Congregationis Approbatione emendati, et editi* (Rome 1629).

ond group had been corrected on the basis of a thorough study of the manuscript material, with the aim to best reflect the authors' intents. A third group of obscure, anonymous hymns had been altered somewhat more drastically, as had a fourth group in which the metre did not seem to function properly. A fifth group, of texts for the Eucharist attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas, had not been tampered with; though they might be defective in elegance, their majesty and the use the Church had made of them proclaimed them inviolable.¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, however, Urban, besides correcting some of the ancient texts, also introduced new ones, precisely ones composed by him. Judging the Pope's policy somewhat romantically and anachronistically, some of his later critics have accused him of 'increasing the Latinity, but decreasing the piety' of the hymns.¹¹⁰ Yet these 'Ciceronianised' hymns were retained for more than three hundred years, till the second Vatican Council, not entirely necessary, decided to eliminate many of Urban's emendations.

Meanwhile, the new texts had to be musically adapted to the polyphony of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, the 16th-century composer whose mostly unaccompanied, so-called "stile antico" continued to reign supreme in the Sistine Chapel long after his death. It was a laborious process that took more than ten years. In 1644, the revision, by Gregorio Allegri (1582–1652)—whose famous "Miserere" for Maundy Thursday was probably heard by Pope Urban as well—, was published in Antwerp, the Netherlands being the foremost musical publishers of Europe.¹¹¹ It contained such interesting settings as the Mass "Vidi turbam magnam". In the mean time, Filippo Vitali (c. 1590–1653), a singer in the Papal Chapel and, moreover, Cardinal Francesco Barberini's acknowledged "virtuoso", well-known for his madrigals, already had provided an alternative, polyphonic setting for Urban's hymns, only, which was published in 1636.¹¹²

Not surprisingly, Urban was well pleased when his favourite musicians, employed either by himself or by his relatives, decided to set his poems to music.

¹⁰⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 761, f. 48^v.

¹¹⁰ A. Springhetti, 'Urbanus VIII P.M. poeta latinus et hymnorum Breviarii emendator', in: *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 6 (1968), 163–190.

¹¹¹ *Hymni Sacri in Breviario Romano* (Antwerp 1644).

¹¹² Filippo Vitali, *Hymni Urbani VIII ... jussu editi* (Rome 1636).

Already in 1624, Johann Kapsberger (c. 1580–1651), who later was employed by Cardinal Antonio Barberini, the Younger, and whose son served Cardinal Francesco, published a first volume of musical settings to Urban's poems under the title *Poemata et Carmina*—obviously an enterprise meant to curry favour with the new pope, of whose cultural patronage all artists held the highest hopes. After a beautiful frontispiece cleverly combining the Barberini emblems in a surround for the Muses offering their products—music and text—to a female figure, the allegorical representation of the Church, there follows a fulsome introduction by the composer. Kapsberger certainly knew what the Pope would like to hear. All Europe now would be able to see that in Rome the arts flourished again. He had made a selection from the papal Pindaric odes, concentrating on those poems that dealt with the triumphs of the saints or presented stories of human intellect spreading the word of Divine Wisdom. There was to be no 'indecent music', only that which would serve the mind's reflection. All in all, Kapsberger's selection comprised ten pieces, amongst which an elaborate setting of the *Paraphrasis in canticum trium puerorum*¹¹³—perhaps because it could be construed to refer to the three papal nephews, Francesco, young Antonio and Taddeo. Rome's foremost musical theorist, the severe critic Giambattista Doni, declared Kapsberger's compositions to be excellent, which, in his discourse, meant in the ancient mode: the music followed the modulation of the words, without adding all kind of florid embellishments that only served the affective needs of the ear. Doni himself asked the composer Pedro de Heredia to provide the music for the text of Urban's sonnet *Passa la vita*; Heredia obliged in Doni's vein, composing the song in the two ancient "modoi" of Dorian and Phrygian.

This set the tone. Kapsberger, while also setting to music texts by Urban's secretary, the poet Ciampoli, as in the beautiful song *I Pastori di Bettelemme*, in 1633 followed up his first volume of papal music with a second one, that seems to be lost. In the meantime, in 1631 he had published a series of, admittedly, rather dull *Missae Urbanae*,¹¹⁴ as well as, in 1632, a setting of Urban's *Litaniae deiparae Virginis*,¹¹⁵ presumably because he knew the Pope's ideas about the Virgin's special position as the Immaculate One. The three masses, for four, five and eight voices

¹¹³ Kapsberger, *o.c.*, 25–32.

¹¹⁴ *BAV, BL*, BN XIII, 167–176.

¹¹⁵ *BAV, BL*, BN XIII, 62–166.

respectively, either with organ or continuo, were after the Tridentine manner, without counterpoint. They often were sung in the Pope's presence.¹¹⁶

Domenico Mazzocchi (1592–1665), famous for his vocal chamber music, in 1638 published a collection of a *capella*-songs under the title *Poemata*,¹¹⁷ all set to Urban's texts. Like Kapsberger's, they comprised ten pieces, for 1, 2, 3 and 6 voices—the last one, significantly, again the *Paraphrasis in canticum trium puerorum*. Some of the settings effectively use the dialogue-like character of Urban's texts to provide expressive musical renderings of the emotions involved.

In the same year, another collection of Mazzocchi's songs appeared, the *Dialoghi e Sonnetti posti in musica*,¹¹⁸ partly based on the Pope's poems as well.¹¹⁹ Rightly famous became the setting of the *Lagrime amare all' anima che langue*, as voiced by Mary Magdalene, one of the Pope's favourite saints. In Mazzocchi's 1640-collection of *Musiche sacre e morali*, Urban's poetry was used again.¹²⁰ In 1641, he published a collection featuring Urban's elegy *Praetereunt anni*, coupled to a dialogue from Virgil's *Aeneid*.¹²¹

We do not know if all this Urbanian music was performed regularly. However, we do know that music was not only a favourite pastime in the various Barberini-households but also an integral part of the evening meetings of the various Roman academies, such as the Academia Basiliense, the Accademia degli Deziosi, and the ones of the Lincei and the Umoristi, to which most of the papal courtiers belonged. Especially the Basiliense, of which Doni was secretary, was famous for its disputes on musical theory; there, the execution of a piece like *Hereidia's* would have served to illustrate Doni's complex views.

¹¹⁶ Hammond, *o.c.*, 167.

¹¹⁷ *BAV, BL, BN XIII*, 4.

¹¹⁸ *BAV, BL, BN XIII*, 7. I have been unable to consult the only modern edition—known to me—of any of Urban's poems-set-to-music, R.E. Englehart's unpublished Ph.D.-thesis defended at Kent State University in 1987: *Domenico Mazzocchi's 'Dialoghi e Sonnetti' and 'Madrigali a Cinque Voci' (1638): A modern edition with biographical commentary and new archival documents*. Though F. Noske, *Saints and Sinners. The Latin Musical Dialogue in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford 1992) deals with Mazzocchi's oeuvre quite extensively, he does not analyze any of his Urbanian settings.

¹¹⁹ A reprint was published: Bologna, 1969.

¹²⁰ *BAV, BL, BN XIII*, 201. A reprint was published: Bologna, 1988.

¹²¹ D. Mazzocchi, *Praetereunt anni. Elogia Urbani papae VIII, et Aeolus, dialogus ex libro primo Aeneidos* (Rome 1641).

Conclusion: "delectare et docere"

Many popes have furthered the cause of poetry, without ever materially contributing to the genre.¹²² Maffeo Barberini, however, was a poet before he could even think to aspire after the papacy. As pope, he continued to be a poet. Rather than, only, expressing a personal aesthetic in his poetry, he used it as the powerful means it was precisely to propagate his deepest convictions and feelings. He felt that, poetry being, in itself, amoral, its obvious propagandistic, for emotional effect could be justified only by giving it a supremely moral content. Not surprisingly, the Poet-Pope's contemporaries more often than not were effusive in their sycophantic praise. Nor have later generations been entirely unkind.¹²³ Yet, this is not the place to pass judgement on the quality of Maffeo Barberini's poetry. Indeed, I feel unable to give such an aesthetic assessment. Much more important, and the very reason why such an assessment nowadays is indeed difficult, is the question of the poems' significance in contemporary culture, a culture essentially religious.

To gauge the role Urban's poems played, a number of facts can be adduced. The first one is that the 'duodecimo', or 'pocket book'-Bologna edition of 1629 specifically announces itself as produced for educational purposes.¹²⁴ Moreover, the Jesuit teachers of the influential *Collegio Romano*, the educational cradle not only of generations of Roman nobles but also of a host of papal civil servants originating from all over Italy and of many foreign students as well, did prescribe the Pope's poems to their pupils.¹²⁵ In fact, they themselves were responsible for the luxury edition brought out by the Vatican Press in 1631. Was it, perhaps, meant to placate the Pope, whith whom the Society of Jesus was constantly battling over issues of religious dogma and policy? As indicated above, in it, each poem is introduced by a commentary indicating, also, the metre that should be used.

The Dillingen-editions of Urban's poems, produced in 1640 and 1643, were Jesuit enterprises, too, and, presumably, meant for educational purposes as well. Not surprisingly, in his letters to the editors, Fathers Forner, Ilsing and Wangenreck, Urban expressed his gratification.¹²⁶

¹²² Cfr. G. Travaglini, *I papi cultori della poesia* (Lanciano 1887).

¹²³ According to Costanzo, *o.c.*, 18–19, the Latin poems at least were favourably judged till well into the 18th century.

¹²⁴ *Maffaei...poemata...curante Academia Noctis* (Bologna 1629), "Lectoribus", 3.

¹²⁵ According to Dormalius, *o.c.*, 42, and J.N. Erythraeus, *Pinacotheca Imaginum illustrium virorum* Vol. II (Cologne 1645), 153.

¹²⁶ Springhetti, *a.c.*, 182.

Some may argue that Urban's poems would not have found a publisher at all if not for blatantly opportunistic reasons. Actually, I disagree. Rather, it seems to me the poems of Maffeo Barberini should be seen—and indeed were seen by his contemporaries—as an valid effort to forge a much-needed synthesis between the *eloquentia profana* and the *eloquentia sacra*, between Humanist and Christian culture, of which the Jesuits were the first advocates. They sought to use—and reconcile—pagan rhetoric and poetry with the aims of Faith as formulated by the Council of Trent.¹²⁷ Once elected to the papacy, Urban must have deeply felt the need to strengthen this policy. Within the broad context of a *renovatio litterarum et artium* that should restore Rome's position at least as the moral capital of the Christian world, the Church also should try to re-tune its language, Latin, to adapt it to the need of convincing as wide an audience as possible of its fundamental truths. Neo-Ciceronian rhetoric was considered the proper means to this cause. Hence, poets who were willing to be guided and inspired by the papal example were given important functions at the papal court: as indicated above, Virginio Cesarini was made *maestro di camera*, Giovanni Ciampoli became secretary of the Papal Briefs. Young Cardinal Francesco appointed the famous rhetorician Agostino Mascardi (1591–1640), who had proven his skills in a verbal recreation of the visual pomp surrounding Urban's formal acceptance of the governance of Rome,¹²⁸ and who knew how to play to people's emotions, to the prestigious chair of rhetoric at the *Sapienza*.¹²⁹

Thus, Rome became more than ever a theatre where all audio-visual means were used to create spectacles that would convince precisely because of the combination of *docere* and *delectare*—the Jesuit ideal also voiced by that influential scholar, Father Bernardino Steffonio, S.J., who had provided the iconographic program of the earliest Barberini 'theatre', the family chapel.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ For this: M. Fumaroli, *L'Age de l'Eloquence. Rhétorique et "res literaria" de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique* (Geneva 1980).

¹²⁸ A. Mascardi, *Le pompe del Campidoglio per la S. di N.S. Urbano VIII quando pigliò il possesso* (Rome s.d.).

¹²⁹ In 1639, Mascardi published, in Paris, his important theoretical works: *Ethicae Prolusiones*, dedicated to Cardinal Antonio, and *Romanae Dissertationes de affectibus...animi earumque characteribus*, dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Barberini.

¹³⁰ See the Prologue to this book. Cfr. also: M. Fumaroli, 'Theatre, humanisme et Contre-Reforme a Rome (1597–1642): l'oeuvre du P. Bernardo Steffonio et son influence', in: *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, XXXIII (1974), 397–412.

The new Barberini Palace became another such theatre, where the pictorial decoration of the State Rooms proclaimed the rightful rule of Urban and of his Barberini relatives as messengers and intermediaries of Divine Wisdom.¹³¹ Though not, strictly speaking, a direct illustration of Urban's poetry, two of the main items of the decoration of the new Barberini Palace can be seen as a visual commentary on his life and achievements, and, more specifically, of the ideals underlying his actions, ideals that were expressed verbally in his poems and, materially, in his general cultural policy.

The new palace's grand *salone* was given a sumptuous ceiling fresco by Pietro da Cortona.¹³² Significantly, the original suggestion to make Jupiter the centre of this fresco—as had, of course, been a long-standing Renaissance tradition—was severely amended by Urban. Holding to his poetic tenet that art should provide a moral message through moral images, he replaced this pagan god with the allegory of Divine Providence. It is this heavenly power that overthrows the giants, the symbols of the various heresies which threaten the foundations of Faith and of the Church.

To help him achieve the desired result, Cortona was asked to also work from a poem published in 1628 by one of Urban's court poets, Francesco Bracciolini. In this text, titled *L'elezione di Urbano Papa VIII*, the Pope was exalted as the man chosen by Divine Wisdom to represent heaven on earth, as the leader of Christ's Church. Hence, in the fresco, Divine Justice crowns the Barberini arms, Religion attaches to them the papal keys, Rome raises the three-tiered crown above them and a cherub descends to surround them with the laurel wreath of the archetypal poet, Apollo. Elsewhere in the palace, the painter Andrea Camassei did depict Urban himself as (the new) Apollo.

The second representation of Barberini-papal ideology in the new palace seems to have been even more closely linked to its most vocal expression, Urban's poetry. Between 1630 and 1641, two sets of tapestries were created for the walls of the great saloon, one of them telling the story of Constantine the Great and of his relics in Rome, which, of course, provided the foundation for the temporal power of the

¹³¹ See, of course, Scott, *o.c.*, though I would rather stress the importance of the message of Divine Wisdom using the Barberini family as a vehicle to reach out to Mankind, than that family's right to rule.

¹³² The most exhaustive treatment in: Scott, *o.c.*, *passim*.

papacy,¹³³ the other representing the Life of Christ, including, amongst other topics, the favourite Urban theme of the life of the Virgin, and of the donation of the keys, which secured the popes' spiritual authority; significantly, one of the tapestries showed a map of the Holy Land, telling, thus, of the ancient papal dream of recapturing the places most sacred to the Christian world.

A third series of ten tapestries was based on iconographical suggestions originally made by Francesco Ubaldini,¹³⁴ though they were woven after Urban's death. It gave the major scenes of the Pope's life—incidentally or not coinciding with the biography of Urban as presented in the introduction to the 1635-Italian edition of his poems by Ferranti as, for example, Maffeo receiving the doctorate in Pisa, Maffeo regulating the flow of Lake Trasimene, and Maffeo-Urban defending Rome from the plague, et cetera. More interestingly, several of this last series of Barberini tapestries can be linked to the two great politically programmatic poems composed by Urban during the last years of his pontificate, the one defending the origins of the dual power of the papacy, viz. over the Universal Church and over the Papal States, and the other calling upon the Christian princes to unite against the common enemy, Islam.¹³⁵

However, there were to have been four additional scenes. It is precisely these, remaining unwoven, that would have glorified the Pope's cultural activities: his patronage of the *virtuosi* of his time, the virtue he acquired through his support of the arts and sciences, specifically the art of rhetoric and the foundation of several institutes of learning.¹³⁶

The great library hall of the new palace, open to the public through a separate entrance, was in itself a veritable theatre, dedicated to the *Logos*, where knowledge was ordered according to the strict laws dictated by its service to Faith: of course, bibles in all languages were given pride of place.¹³⁷ Soon, the library was famous, one of the sights of

¹³³ D. Du Bon, *Tapestries from the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art: the History of Constantine the Great* (Aylesbury 1964).

¹³⁴ Thus far, I have followed the analysis and interpretation offered by Scott, *o.c.*, 186–189. Cfr. also: I. Faldi, *I cartoni per gli arazzi Barberini della serie di Urbano VIII* (Rome 1967); U. Barberini, 'Gli arazzi e i cartoni della serie 'Vita di Urbano VIII' dell'arazzeria Barberini', in: *Bollettino d'Arte*, 53 (1968), 92–100.

¹³⁵ The poems titled *Primordia* and *Adhortatio ad Bellum Sacrum*. See: *Poesie Latine* (Rome 1642), 34–48, 111–126.

¹³⁶ The list of themes is given in: *BAV, AB*, Indice II, 2693.

¹³⁷ For a contemporary description, see: G. Teti, *Aedes Barberini ad Quirinalem* (Rome 1641).

17th-century Rome, praised in guidebooks and poems alike.¹³⁸ No wonder that, though this was hardly customary, Cardinal Francesco, the most important Barberini connected with the palace despite the fact that he actually spent most of his time in the Cancelleria, used the room for some of his more politically spectacular audiences.¹³⁹ It was, indeed, a room that made a statement. In it, the statue of its founder, Pope Urban, was flanked by Mercury and Minerva, which seemed to proclaim that in this Pope these two allegorical figures found their ideal synthesis: pagan *Eloquentia* should, thus, lead to Christian *Sapientia*, bring man to Divine Wisdom. It was the message Urban had been proclaiming in his poems. It was the message that the cultural policy of his papacy proclaimed in many of its manifestations.

So perhaps there was something of a poetic program underlying Barberini propaganda and politics after all. Yet it was not a program that relied on the literalness of words, alone. On the contrary, most of Maffeo's poems, in referring to a universe ruled by abstract ethical and indeed moral-religious principles, could only do so by using metaphors and symbolic concepts, relying on the power of the verbal and the visual image as much as on the literal meaning of words. Precisely because the culture of the Baroque period was not, yet, a 'literal' culture only, it resulted in a unity not only of the arts but of all aspects of life—at least in the vision of the pope who dominated these decades.

¹³⁸ E.g. A. Florente, 'In Bibliothecam Francisci card. Barberini', in: *Poemata septem illustrium virorum* (Antwerp 1660).

¹³⁹ Gigli, *o.c.*, June 1642.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE MAIN (COLLECTED) EDITIONS
OF THE POEMS OF MAFFEO BARBERINI¹⁴⁰

*Illustrissimi et reverendissimi Maffaei Sacrae Romanae Ecclesiae cardinalis Barberini...
Poemata* (Paris, A. Stephane, 1620, though the privilege is dated 1621) (in
4.o). [31 poems]

*Ill.mi et rev.mi Maffaei SRE card. Barberini...nunc Urbani papae VIII poemata. Editio
secunda* (Paris, A. Stephane, 1623) (in 4.o). [31 poems]
(Reprinted: Cologne, 1626)
(Reprinted: Vienna 1627)

Sancti Domini Nostri Urbani VIII...poemata
(Parma 1624). [32 poems]

SDN Urbani VIII...poemata
(Vienna 1627) [33 poems]

Ill. et rever. Maffaei...Barberini nunc Urbani VIII Poemata
(Venice 1628) (in 8.o) [33 poems]

*Maffaei card. Barberini, nunc Urbani VIII...poemata. Editio caeterorum locupletissima,
curante Academia Noctis*
(Bologna 1628) (in 12.o) [46 poems]

Maphaei SRE card. Barberini, nunc Urbani PP VIII Poemata
(Rome, Vatican Printing Office, 1631) (in 4.o) [83 poems]

Maphaei SRE card. Barberini, nunc Urbani PP VIII Poemata
(Rome, Vatican Printing Office, 1631) (in 8.o)

Maphaei SRE card. Barberini, nunc Urbani PP VIII Poemata
(Rome, Printing Office of the Apostolic Chamber, A. Bragiotti, 1631) [83
poems].
(Reprinted: Antwerp 1634 [94 poems])
(Reprinted: Rome 1635 [107 poems], 1637 [121 poems], 1638 [129 poems],
1640 [144 poems])
(Reprinted: Dillingen 1640 [144 poems], 1643 [144 poems])

¹⁴⁰ My survey, based on my own research, though certainly not as extensive as the various Castagnetti lists, *ut supra note* 309, differs from them in a few respects, probably due to differing bibliographical data.

- Poesie toscane del card. Maffeo Barberini, hoggi papa Urbano Ottavo*
 (Rome, Printing Office of the Apostolic Chamber, 1635) (in 12.o)
 (Reprinted: Rome 1637 [in 4.o], 1638 [in 4.o], 1640 [in 12.o])
 (Reprinted: Paris, 1635 [in 12.o])
- In Odas eminentissimi cardinalis olim Barberini nunc Sanctissimi Papis Urbano VIII Iulii
 Caesaris Capacii notae*
 (Naples 1633, reprinted 1635) [N.B.: only the first part was published]
- Maphaei SRE card. Barberini nunc Urbani papae VIII poemata. Poesie toscane del card.
 Maffeo Barberini hoggi papa Urbano Ottavo*
 (Paris, Royal Printing Office, 1642) (in 4.o).
- Poesie latine del card. Maffeo Barberini hoggi papa Urbano ottavo tradotte in verse sciolte da
 Gio. Francesco Ferranti*
 (Rome 1642)
- Maphaei SRE card. Barberini, nunc Urbani PP VIII Poemata. Henricus Dormalius
 explicabat* (Rome, L. Grignani, 1643) (in 4.o)
 [N.B.: only one volume of the projected three was published].
- Ode alla pindarica della Santità di Nostro Signore Urbano VII, trasportate nella rima
 toscana da Francesco Carducci*
 (Rome 1644).
- Maphaei SRE card. Barberini, nunc Urbani PP VIII Poemata. Praemissis quibusdam de
 vita auctoris et annotationibus adjectis. Edidit Josephus Brown... Oxonii*
 (Oxford 1726).

CHAPTER THREE

THE 'DAYS AND WORKS' OF FRANCESCO, CARDINAL BARBERINI, OR: HOW TO BE A POWERFUL CARDINAL-*PADRONE*?

Introduction

Probably sometime in the year 1623 or 1624, someone connected with the court of the new pope, Urban VIII, decided to sit down and write a lengthy, highly normative memorandum which, after he had finished its 125th and last section, he addressed to Urban's nephew, young Francesco Barberini (1597–1679),¹ newly-created cardinal and nominated Cardinal-*Padrone*, or papal 'Prime Minister'.²

Many aspects of the long career of Urban's favourite nephew have been analysed before: Francesco's perhaps not very important role in European politics during the years of his uncle's pontificate, his indubitable influence on the government of the Papal States and his gigantic artistic and scholarly patronage. Reading, and realizing the importance of, the anonymous memorandum cited above—to which I have added information from a number of parallel texts outlining various other elements desirable in the behaviour of a cardinal-nephew entrusted with the running of the affairs of the Church and the Papal States—I felt I had an opportunity to look behind what up till now was a façade, only. Asking what kind of advice this young man was given

¹ For a general sketch of Barberini's (political) life, see, of course, Pastor the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (= *DBI*), 6 (Rome, 1964), 172–176. The typescript thesis of: M.G. Iodice, *Il cardinal Francesco Barberini* (Rome 1965), is of no real value. A short manuscript biography is in: *BAV*, Manoscritti Urbinatensi Latini, Vol.1646, ff. 388–391. I have also used A. Spano's manuscript notes, as cited below.

² *BAV*, *BL*, Vol. 5672. To be quoted as: Manual. The text is both anonymous and without date, but from its chapter 123 it is clear that it was directed to Francesco while still a young man. A small part of it has been published by: A. Kraus, ed., 'Ambt und Stellung des Kardinalnepoten zur Zeit Urbans VIII (1623)', in: *Römische Quartalschrift für Christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* (to be cited as: *RQ*), (1958), 238–243. Kraus, however, was interested only in the few chapters dealing with the workings of the State Secretariat.

when he acquired, at an evidently tender age, a power usually reserved for prime ministers of far more advanced years and experience, I hope to understand to what extent Francesco's politics were structured by the good counsel and high moral principle evident in these and kindred texts. Though the advise may not always have been taken and followed, these documents at least will show us what kind of image Francesco had to live up to, what kind of behaviour was expected of him, and what kind of power he was supposed to achieve through it.

In the introduction to his "specchio", or 'mirror', the anonymous author enumerates his sources: the 'sacred books', of course, meaning both the Bible and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, but also historical and political writings and "discorsi", the rather more normative texts addressed at various dignitaries of the Church that proliferated in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, he also has consulted various experienced cardinals and courtiers, in order to add practical advice to his otherwise rather theoretical prescriptions. Yet, the author probably was not a "letterato", an erudite or he would have filled his text with many allusions to Classical antiquity, as well as employing a far more florid and rhetorical style. The resulting memorandum is, in fact, a manual, a written course on how to succeed as a cardinal-nephew. The kind of cardinal-nephew the writer would like Francesco to be is obvious, if only from the few predecessors he mentions by name, first and foremost San Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584), the cardinal-nephew of Pope Pius V. They are the ones who adhered to the tenets of Trent, the ones who did their best to make the Church as good and saintly as had been the "Chiesa primitiva".³

The text is based on what I would term a rather Baroque psychology. It is entirely constructed around opposites, relying for its message upon an analysis of the extremes of good and evil and the ensuing behaviour. Indeed, the realization that Man is torn between the poles of opposite emotions, and that the only way to minimize the inherently destructive power of these opposites is to reach a controlled balance of behaviour that will be effective as opposed to actions that will not, seems an expression of the Baroque mind that, far from being uncontrolled, demanded precisely the domination of the senses.

³ Manual, chapter 93.

How to be a cardinal?

Of course, the papal nephew chosen to be his uncle's chief adviser, primarily acting as his Minister of the Interior—the Congregations of the "Buon Governo" and the "Consulta" as well as the "Camera Apostolica"—but also supervising the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the "Segretaria di Stato", had to be a cardinal, first. Admittedly, the grip of the Sacred College on the affairs of the Church had been weakened considerably during the 16th century, largely because successive popes has successfully tried to break it; this had resulted in a situation wherein the pope truly had become both pontiff and prince, the near-absolute spiritual and temporary ruler both of the Universal Church and of its territorial basis, the Papal States; meanwhile, the members of the College of Cardinals, while losing their erstwhile independence, had been transformed into the highest echelon of a powerful bureaucracy. Consequently, to be able to function as its actual head, the *padrone* had to be a cardinal as well.⁴

Therefore, though without using this argument, the writer begins his text with an analysis of the history and contemporary function of the cardinalate.⁵ He certainly was not the first to do so. Texts about this theme occur fairly often in the 16th and 17th century, and the author admits to having read some of them, although regrettably he does not give any specific references.

As to its genesis, the author claims that the cardinalate was already an institution during the reign of the Emperor Constantine. We may assume that this had to be stressed if only because the official fiction held that the papacy derived its temporal power from Constantine's donation; hence, the cardinals wanted the origin of their power, and their role in the government of the Lands of St. Peter to be at least contemporary with it.

However, first and foremost, to be a cardinal—whether of the rank of deacon, priest or bishop—means being a man of the Church, which in itself elevates one above the other men of this world: a prince may govern men's bodies, but a priest governs their souls. Indeed, being a cardinal not only means being an elector of popes, and, as such, being entitled to help and counsel the person one has elected, it also means one is a 'Prince of the Church', which puts one on an equal

⁴ For this and the following, see, also: Rietbergen, *Pausen*, o.c.

⁵ Manual, chapters 1–10.

footing with reigning princes. Just as the kings of Europe should accept the supremacy of the emperor, so a cardinal accepts the supremacy of the pope. If further proof of this reasoning were necessary, one should mention that the cardinals govern the Church when the pope dies, and that one of them is bound to be the next pope. The author fails to mention the obvious parallel, viz. the fact that there used to be a time when the princes of Europe could be elected to the imperial dignity; indeed, he may have wisely thought that to point this out might be politically inopportune: Pope Urban, for one, would not like to see the king of France, to give but one example, being named ‘King of the Romans’, emperor-elect.

In consequence, but also in proof of all this, cardinals wear purple, a sign of royal rank; also, they cover their head and sit down in the presence of the pope, the emperor and ruling princes, behaviour strictly forbidden to other mortals. Moreover, the cardinalate confers noble status on its incumbent’s relatives as well; indeed, many an Italian family owed its nobility to a cardinal-forebear, such as the Cesi and the Cesarini. Also, members of ruling houses covet this rank: the Habsburg, the Bourbon, the Savoy, the Bragança all continually try to have one of their family elevated to the purple.

Despite this rather rosy characterization of the cardinalate, the memorandum’s author does not mince matters when he stresses that being a cardinal certainly does not entitle one to a life of ease and happiness, only. On the contrary, it means bearing a heavy responsibility. To be constantly at the centre of power, to have to be an honest adviser, who speaks his mind and does not flatter, is a difficult task indeed. Many lamentably fail to fulfil it properly. Of late, even, a situation has arisen wherein ‘the vices, defects and abuses of the Roman Curia...are all attributed to the bad example or negligence of pope and cardinals, and as this Court is the touchstone for all Christendom, pope and cardinals have to account for all the vileness and corruption that come about.’⁶

Obviously, a cardinal’s dignity is not hereditary; the fame one might acquire through its proper fulfilment dies with one. Therefore, a virtuous life is one’s only salvation. Perfecting one’s virtue requires nothing else but to make one’s spirit the free and absolute master over

⁶ Manual, chapter 11.

one's baser instincts; though perfection is unattainable on earth, one can work on it, following St. Paul's adage "virtus in infirmitate perficitur."⁷

It is essential always to follow the dictates of reason: they will enable man to discern between good and evil. Indeed, the logical choice almost always is the virtuous one. For example, charity is nearer to liberality than to miserliness and, consequently, one should be charitable. Courage is nearer to temerity than to timidity; consequently, one chooses the courageous line of action. Knowing that each man is inclined to specific vices, one should rather follow the path to the opposite ones, and, consequently, end up in between, thus once more setting oneself on a course dictated by reason.

Addressing Francesco in this vein may have made good sense indeed. For the young cardinal through his intellectual and moral training in the Jesuit *Collegio Romano*, had been thoroughly inculcated with the Aristotelian system of virtues as born from the mediation of extremes. In the Jesuit *ratio studiorum*, cleverly constructed sermons and convincingly staged plays, often taking themes from Tacitus' 'Annals' and 'Histories' to provide analogies for contemporary life and action, all contributed to that one end.

As to the numerous virtues one could and should pursue as a cardinal, the so-called intellectual ones were deemed less important than the moral ones. Indeed, the author, though not actually discouraging the pursuit of learning for its own sake, treats it rather disparagingly—as Maffeo himself had done, in a poem addressed at one of his brothers: 'learning without piety is inane'. A cardinal does not have to be well versed in natural philosophy, metaphysics and legal theory. Nevertheless, Man being the most restless and vain of all animals, a cardinal, as a man called upon to lead other men, will have to acquire 'a knowledge of all forms of knowledge, as well as an ability to exercise all abilities.'⁸

What a cardinal certainly needs is good Latin, to be able to understand texts of a theological and a legal-practical nature, to expound his views in the consistory—the periodic gatherings of the cardinals, under the pope's supervision—and in the various departments of central government, the Congregations. Surprisingly albeit implicitly admitting to the decline of Italian, the author also stresses some good Latin is

⁷ Manual, chapter 12.

⁸ Manual, chapter 20.

needed to converse with the ambassadors who arrive in Rome from beyond the Alps, because ‘they are used to speaking Latin without any barbarisms.’⁹

In more than forty short chapters, the text then goes on to enumerate and elaborate upon a great many specific virtues, most of them based on the three Christian ones, Charity, Faith and Hope—in that order.¹⁰ Specific attention is given to the need to liberally share one’s worldly possessions with others, both one’s relatives and immediate servants, and, via almsgiving, the population at large. Being a cardinal, in Rome, obliges one to be conscious of the specific and exemplary function one has in this respect.

In a way, the chapters devoted to this aspect of a cardinal’s behaviour,¹¹ seem a direct endorsement of the system of nepotism: did not Christ himself choose his apostles and disciples among his relatives?¹² Still, while avarice is a vice, and liberality is indeed essential, it should not become prodigality; and while liberal spending—which, if it is directed towards the realization of grand projects, is called magnificence—is desirable when it affects the public good, one should take care not to overdo it; too often, men spend fortunes rather to impress the world with their wealth than to improve it.

Perhaps because he is addressing a young man, in the end the author adds the following remark. If all this does not come naturally, one should not despair. One should work hard, and seek the counsel and conversation of exemplary, learned men, of whom Rome has many, both among the ecclesiastics and among laymen.¹³ As we will see, this, at least, is advice that Francesco took to heart.

How to be a cardinal and a papal nephew?

The fusion of the two dignities of cardinal and papal nephew in the function of Cardinal-*Padrone*, sometimes called *Soprintendente dello Stato Ecclesiastico* as well, posed its own demands. As a cardinal, one should be an example to each and everyone. As a papal nephew, one was

⁹ Manual, chapter 22.

¹⁰ Manual, chapters 26–69.

¹¹ Manual, chapters 56–64.

¹² Manual, chapter 63.

¹³ Manual, chapter 21.

'the principal actor who, besides His Holiness, was put on the stage of this Theatre of Holy Church, to be viewed by all the World.'¹⁴ One should be an example of honesty and piety as had been, among recent "cardinali-*padroni*", Saint Charles Borromeo.

The author explains that the function of *Padrone* was, essentially, the outcome of the fact that most men elected to the papacy would normally be of a quite advanced age. The assistance of a trusted, younger relative made all the difference in the heavy task of the daily management of the affairs of Church and State.¹⁵ Hence, the *Padrone* had to read the thousands of letters annually addressed to the Curia by the papal nuncios and other representatives all over the world, as well as by the ambassadors and agents sent to Rome by the Christian princes and their governments; in doing so, he certainly should not rely on the summaries made by his subordinates.¹⁶ With this advice, the author of the manual showed his knowledge of official practice both in the State Secretariat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in the *Consulta*, the supreme council for the Papal States. Also, the *Padrone* should attentively listen to the verbal reports of returning nuncios and the harangues of the ambassadors accredited at the papal court. On the basis of the knowledge and insight thus acquired, he could effectively be the pope's trusted counsellor in all questions regarding the government of the Church.¹⁷ This passage shows that Francesco, though not appointed Secretary of State till 1628, was supposed to become acquainted with foreign affairs though these still were the official domain of his maternal uncle, Cardinal Lorenzo Magalotti, who, incidentally, had been given an extensive manual explaining the management of his department.¹⁸

To control the affairs of the Papal States, the *Padrone* should set a weekly hour to give audience to the governor of Rome and the town's senators and conservators, and to the head of the Apostolic Chamber and the judges of the major courts. He should read the numerous letters that almost daily came in from the legates governing the five provinces of the Papal States, the vice-legates and presidents of the

¹⁴ Manual, chapter 15.

¹⁵ Manual, chapter 18.

¹⁶ Manual, chapter 71.

¹⁷ Manual, chapter 17.

¹⁸ A. Kraus, ed., 'Das päpstliche Staatssekretariat im Jahre 1623. Eine Denkschrift des ausscheidenden Sostituto an den neu-ernannten Staatssekretär', in: *RQ*, o.c., (1957), 93-122.

lesser districts, the governors and town councils of the cities, et cetera. He should decide which ones could be answered directly, and which ones had to be discussed in the *Consulta*, first, or, exceptionally, with the Pope himself.¹⁹ He should convene the *Consulta* twice a week in his own rooms, to deliberate on civil and criminal affairs, each time dealing with one specific province. He might also consider inviting the officials involved to join him for his weekly public audience, to ensure that complaints put before him which could be dealt with directly were indeed solved as soon as possible.²⁰

The subsequent chapters are written in a rather Machiavellian vein, revealing a view of the working of government and politics that was, indeed, influenced by a heavily rationalist attitude.

Preferably, the Cardinal-*Padrone* should visit the Pope twice a day, present the facts and the alternatives for action to be taken, and then retire to await the Pope's decision. He was allowed to try and plead a specific prince's cause with his uncle if he was honest and open about it; he might then go on to ensure the public knew that the Pope's favourable decision had indeed been due to his influence. Thus, Pope Pius III (1439–1503) used to openly explain which policies had been adopted on the advice of his nephew, who consequently gained great favour with the European princes, which facilitated his dealings with them.

However, the *Padrone* should never allow himself to become partisan in international conflicts; the bad effects of such actions both for themselves and for the papacy could be witnessed from the experiences of the ill-fated nephew of Alexander VI, the infamous Cesare Borgia, and of the relatives of Paul IV, the Carafa family. Also, the *Padrone* should never counsel for strong action; specifically, the decision to mete out heavy punishments should be left to the Pope or the *Consulta*; nor should he attend executions.²¹ Obviously, the author felt the *Cardinal-Padrone* should be seen by the wider public as a positive, rather than a negative force.

The selection of expert collaborators and officials was, of course, of vital importance if the *Padrone* wanted to master an otherwise insur-

¹⁹ Manual, chapter 18.

²⁰ Manual, chapters 84–85.

²¹ Manual, chapters 71–75.

mountable workload. Secretaries for foreign affairs, each one to be entrusted with a specific region of the Christian world, should be chosen not 'from new arrivals, from the lesser classes, but from those who with their nobility, or at least respectable background, combined learning, valour, experience, goodness, integrity, fidelity and secrecy.'²² For such men, a specific manual was provided, based largely on Angelo Ingegneri's *Il buon segretario* of 1544.²³

The same advice held for the selection of the men who would exercise the temporal and spiritual government of the Papal States, although they should preferably be prelates as well. So should be the men who were sent to foreign courts to act as the pope's nuncios. The past—which, to the author, apparently, meant the 16th century—had shown that especially such eminent and virtuous "letterati" as the scholars Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) and Iacopo Sadoletto (1477–1547), as well as Monsignori Cervini (1501–1555), Del Monte (1487–1555) and De'Medici (1535–1605), had proven satisfactory; such men were, so to speak, the material cardinals could be made of—which, in fact, was what had happened to all the ones mentioned in this series—and, consequently, from whose midst a pope could be chosen; that, of course, had been the case with the latter three: Cervini and Del Monte became Pope Marcellus II and Julius III, respectively, and, assuming the third one to have been Alessandro de'Medici, he became Pope Leo XI, though for 27 days, only. Significantly, the author does not identify any of these men beyond their mere names; he just assumes Francesco will know them, and their merits—though we know that, e.g., Pope Julius' 'virtue' had raised various eyebrows.

The *Padrone* should compile dossiers of possible candidates for the higher echelons of Church and State government, including data on their background, their education, the people they associated with and their behaviour; in the case of ecclesiastics, he might enquire about them with their parishioners. In a way, his dossiers would be like a "seminario de'Papi".²⁴ I was fascinated to find that, whether or not he was actually following this advice, Barberini did indeed keep notes on promising men, albeit not systematically.²⁵

²² Manual, chapter 77.

²³ The text is in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 5087, fols. 123–137. Part of it has been published by: A. Kraus, ed., 'Die Aufgaben eines Sekretärs zur Zeit Urbans VIII (1623)', in: *Römische Quartalschrift*, o.c., (1958), 89–92.

²⁴ Manual, chapters 77–82.

²⁵ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4592.

The wider context of the roles of the Cardinal-*Padrone* was, of course, the papal court, to which the manual devotes a lengthy and revealing chapter.

The Curia, which can be equated with Rome, is a microcosm both of the Church and of the Catholic world: one might call it the Republic of the Christians. Its citizens are the ecclesiastical dignitaries, the officials of Church and State, the numerous servants and the people who choose to be there. All of them either want to achieve honour or to advance their own interests, sometimes purely materialistic ones. If one shows valour and virtue in Rome, one will be admired in the entire world. Conversely, if one comes to Rome, one comes to the Mother, to the place where virtuous men are nurtured. Yet, Rome, the papal court, also attracts many persons who lead a life of hypocrisy and vice. Hence, it is the task of the *Padrone* to follow the adage “*homo homini deus*”, to act like God in distinguishing between the good and the bad. He should take care to distribute honours among the deserving and try to induce those who have a reputation for valour and virtue, wherever they live, to come to Rome, showing them that the pope and the papal court need and appreciate them. Thus, the Republic of the Christians will grow in splendour and increasingly be filled with people of merit. Contributing to this end, the papal nephew, who should realize that he is but a passing pilgrim on the stage of this ‘eternal’ court, will fulfil his function.²⁶

The proper distribution of honours and rewards is not an easy task. In the recent past, it has not been functioning as desired. There are two things the *Padrone* should bear in mind. First, of course, that the citizens of this Republic should be valued according to their merits. However, enumerating the various groups who make up the papal court, the writer of the manual insists that the servants of the Church should always precede the laymen. Also, the *Padrone* should make clear that those who receive favours know he is the one who has procured them through his intercession with the pope. On the other hand, especially in the case of the other cardinals, he should not stress he is the only vector through which one may have the pope’s ear; on the contrary, he should encourage them to find out for themselves how they stand with the pope.

²⁶ Manual, chapter 101.

It is necessary to keep book of all those who deserve to be somehow rewarded. The *Padrone* needs a 'secretary for the memorials', who will read and summarize the numerous requests for jobs and other favours. On the other hand, this secretary might also make it his task to compile files on all people connected with the court, listing all data that might be useful. Whether the writer, in suggesting this, proposed some sort of secret service, is not clear. However, the next chapter, short and rather intriguing, deals with the many conflicts that constantly arise among the members of the court and threaten its peace.²⁷ Often, these originate in disputes over titles and precedence. Without further comment, the author also notes the destructive power of rancour and revenge among the elites of the cities of the Papal States.²⁸ One might reason that what with rank and reward being considered the visible expression of one's standing and favour, as well as of one's power, such disputes were dangerous indeed; if only for that reason, any background information that might help the *Padrone* to placate and sooth inflamed feelings and act as a mediator was helpful indeed.

Sometime during the 1620's or the 1630's,²⁹ another anonymous writer composed a longish memorandum to remind the Cardinal-*Padrone* of his duties more specifically in the field of religious image building and propaganda. It clearly reveals what informed contemporaries considered to be the proper infrastructure for the kind of cultural policy that aimed at the preservation of the power of the Church.

The author stated that of old the task to defend the Church had been entrusted to the regular clergy, who had gained great privilege because of it. Formerly, this policy had been effective, since such men as St. Anthony, St. Thomas Aquinas, Agostino Trionfi (1243–1328),

²⁷ Manual, chapter 103.

²⁸ The background of this situation is sketched in: Rietbergen, Pausen, *o.c.*, chapter V.

²⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4592, 184^v–189^r: "Modo suggerito al Sig. Cardinale Barberini per aver uomini doti da valersene per rispondere alle scritture et alle stampe che ogni giorno si divulgano contro i Dogmi della fede e contro l'autorità del Pontefice". It is not altogether clear when exactly this memorandum was written. It is tempting to date its genesis to the mid- or late-1620's, as, consequently, its aim would have been to help the as yet inexperienced Cardinal-*Padrone* to formulate and implement his cultural policy in this wide and important field. However, though the author refers to the building activities of the Oratorians, we do not know whether he means the *Chiesa Nuova* or the adjacent 'palace', the *Casa Professa*. Therefore, the text may have originated either in the 1620's or the 1630's.

the well-known Canon Law scholar and Marian poet, and Cardinal Juan de Torquemada (1388–1468), the famous Dominican theologian and, incidentally, the uncle of Spain's first grand inquisitor, had proven their worth. Again, the author only mentions these men by their mere names, obviously assuming Francesco would know them and immediately recognize their importance as pillars of papal authority. Nowadays, however, those who show great learning also display great ambition. In his many and influential writings, a man like Paolo Sarpi (1552–1623), the procurator-general of the Servite Order, has vented his rage over the fact that he was denied a bishopric in the form of a vehement denunciation of the papacy. He is, or so the author feels, only one of many members of the regular clergy who, out of spite or from other motives, have turned against their benefactors and patrons. Therefore, a change of policy is called for. The Holy See should follow the example of the secular princes and simply attract the best scholars by the means that have proven effective since time immemorial, viz. high salaries as well as favours for the men thus lured to Rome, and, if applicable, for their families, too.

Two positions stand out to be filled with such worthies. The *Maestro del Sacro Palazzo*, who acts as the papal chief censor, has a function that allows ample time to compose writings in defence of papal authority. The post used to be reserved for a Dominican. According to the anonymous author, whom one probably should not seek in Dominican circles, the Italian Dominicans at present have no suitable candidate. Therefore, the universities of Europe should be searched for a capable man to offer it to. The second post is that of first custodian of the Vatican Library, a real plum. With the honour and research facilities attached to it, it always attracted the best scholars anyway. However, if a vacancy occurs now, care should be taken to fill it with a man well schooled in theology and Canon Law.

Then, of course, there is the *Sapienza*, the papal university, where the chairs of theology and Canon Law should be endowed with much higher salaries, to raise their status to the level of the best in Europe. Other states, like Spanish Milan and Venice, have seen the wisdom of carefully husbanding these vital professorships. The Holy See should not lag behind. Nor should one be squeamish where the combination of learning and politics is concerned. In Spain, the *Collegios Mayores* provide professors to fill vital political positions; after serving some time at these institutes of higher education, they are given a senior administrative job, or, perhaps, a bishopric. They will then be more than willing

to write in favour of royal jurisdiction, as the example of Covarrubias has shown,³⁰ and as that of Salgado would have demonstrated had his wings not been clipped by Duke Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy.

The Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, too, has a task in this field of cultural policy. It should employ two or three men to write against the heretics. This may even be more effective than the preaching of the missionaries it sends all over the world—incidentally, the “Propaganda Fide” only had been founded in 1622, a year before the accession of Urban VIII. A choice might be made of both Dominicans and Jesuits. They traditionally enjoy high standing in the world of learning, and their continuous competition ensures a good performance.

One should not forget the *Chiesa Nuova*, either, that famous institution of piety and learning which used to attract such eminent men as Cardinal Baronius—the great historian of the Church—, Antonio Bosio—the archaeologist of early Christian Rome—, and Tarugi. The author of the manual does not characterize these men as I have done, obviously assuming young Francesco would be familiar with their names and, moreover, with their work that, perhaps not incidentally, was the kind of work that helped upheld the power of Rome and the papacy.

He continues to argue it would be quite appropriate if some of the great riches the Oratorians now devote ‘to the magnificence of their buildings’ should be spent in building up a great library, always an effective means to stimulate scholarship and induce learned men to enter the Congregation. Obviously, the author is referring to the huge church-cum-convent-palace the architect Francesco Borromini (1599–1667) was building for the Oratorians on the Via Papalis; his aside provides a fascinating view of the diverging opinions on the function of architectural display vs. the patronage of learning.

The memorandum concludes both with a general, and a particular remark. First, the author indicates that the best option would be to establish a *collegio* specifically to house the scholars entrusted with the propagandistic-learned tasks foremost in his mind. However, he admits that the money for such an establishment is lacking. The source of his inspiration may have been Richelieu’s recently founded Royal Academy in Paris. Perhaps it is no coincidence that I found a note out-

³⁰ The author probably alludes to the Spanish theologian and Canon Law scholar Diego de Covarrubias (1512–1577), who staunchly upheld papal authority.

lining the organization and aims of this institution in the very wrapper of Barberini's papers that also contains this memorandum.³¹

But granting that such a scheme is impossible, the author still stresses the fact that the Holy See should use the one means it certainly has to attract and reward those who can best serve as its apologists, viz. benefices and bishoprics. As to Barberini's role, his prestigious position as the pope's nephew, as well as the court he keeps, and the great library he is building, all may serve as the perfect context for the appointment of two eminent scholars to the position of theologian and canonist. Thus, he will serve God and the Holy See, and provide a 'most worthy example to the nephews of future popes'—another implicit reminder that a breach with past practice was called for.

Interestingly, I found that, possibly following the above cited anonymous advice, two theologians were indeed summoned to enter Barberini's *famiglia*.³² Also, this text may have served as a reminder of a fact that was, of course, well-known but yet might need to be stressed precisely if the text was addressed to a new arrival like young Francesco, viz. that the new Pope and his new Cardinal-*Padrone* could dispose of powerful means to attract famous scholars to their service and, thus, make them help to build their image. Being the huge institution it had become over the ages, the Roman Church now could dole out an enormous amount of profitable positions in central papal bureaucracy. Though they were, mostly, empty functions, sinecures, without a working load worth speaking of, they still carried a sometimes considerable 'salary' and, of course, considerable status, as well as something that might in the end turn out even more valuable: access to the corridors of power, coveted by all those who wanted to climb even higher on the ladder of curial success. Judging their subsequent policies, the Barberini needed little advise to become aware of the fact that, in combination with the stipends or with outright pensions attached to the hundreds of abbeys, monasteries and bishoprics that, all over Europe, somehow were in the pope's giving, they could draw the appropriate people into the papal service—they had, of course, profited from the system themselves.

Thus, soon such men as the papal mathematician Benedetto Castelli, the famous antiquary Cassiano dal Pozzo, and the Parisian Dupuy-

³¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4592, ff. 180^r–182^v.

³² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 5635, f. 93^r.

brothers who ranked among France's most famous scholars, soon were tied to the Barberini interest through the livings that were in the Cardinal's gift, though Pope Urban himself was not without scruples about this use of the forces of his arm spiritual.

In the 1620s, Nicholas Fabri de Peiresc, the French erudite and collector who first had cultivated his contacts with Urban while the latter still was a poetically inclined cardinal, became a self-appointed adviser to young Francesco, in a sense the man who, probably unwittingly, helped the cardinal to implement the policy outlined in the above memorandum. I even wonder whether, perhaps, he wrote it himself.

Through his education in Italy and his repeated stays in the Eternal City, Peiresc was well aware of the many possibilities open to Pope Urban and his nephew for the advancement of learning and, consequently, of the learned, especially those whom Peiresc thought most deserving of his protection and recommendation.

For some fourteen years, Peiresc, to further the career or, whenever such a concept did not apply, the cultural status of his many friends, made it his habit to write to Barberini asking him to take such persons into his service, or at least receive them when they travelled to Rome and assist them in whatever business brought them there. Thus, we find a learned canon from Liège, Henri Dormeuil, one of Peiresc's long-time friends, journeying to Rome and, on the strength of Peiresc's recommendation, entering Barberini's household as a researcher in the fields of ancient history, classical philology and numismatics.³³ He even became 'interpreter' and, finally, editor of Pope Urban's poems.³⁴

Always, Peiresc made sure to appeal to the Cardinal's need for such men, stressing they could become valuable instruments of cultural policy and would help Barberini to (re-)create the image of Rome as the cultural capital of Christendom as well as the seat of its spiritual and temporal rulers. Thus, when Girolamo Aleandro (1574–1649), the famous Humanist,³⁵ became a member of Barberini's *famiglia* in 1624, his old friend Peiresc hastened to assure Francesco that in France not only the cultured elite, the "letterati", but also those who governed the state and conversed with these "letterati" were greatly pleased with Barberini's decision.

³³ See: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2177, ff. 53^r, sqq.

³⁴ See Chapter II of this book.

³⁵ For Peiresc's correspondence with Aleandro, see: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6504.

Francesco was indeed eager to befriend Europe's great minds. In 1626, the scholar Dom Christophe Dupuy arrived in Rome. He was one of Peiresc's friends and, moreover, the Carthusian brother of the two more famous 'Dupuy-brothers' Jacques and Pierre, who were at the centre of a Paris-based circle of intellectuals wherein Peiresc moved whenever he visited the capital. Soon, Dupuy found Cardinal Barberini going out of his way to visit him in the monastery where he stayed, specifically to honour his merits and the favourable opinion given of him by Peiresc.³⁶

Meanwhile, in Rome, the historian Gabriel Naudé (1600–1653) was among Peiresc's regular correspondents, he the first custodian of Barberini's rapidly growing book collection, and later the librarian of that other great Cardinal-collector and Prime Minister—but of France—, viz., Jules Mazarin. So was Jean-Jacques Bouchard (1606–1641), a leading mathematician who through his letters communicated with colleagues all over Europe and, in the 1630's, was appointed by Barberini his 'Secretary for Latin Letters'.

Reading the often long letters these men wrote to their Provençal friend, and following up the themes touched upon therein through the extensive correspondence which Peiresc maintained with a number of other friends spread all over Europe, one not only sees the genesis of many a scholarly or scientific idea or notion, one also witnesses the building of the image of Rome as an international centre of learning, and of the Barberini family as the all-powerful patrons presiding over the process.

Baroque behaviour: Young Francesco's 'days and works'

It is difficult to decide to what extent the manual and the memorandum analysed above influenced the life and actions of its addressee.

Francesco's education before he suddenly reached the cardinalate had been thorough, as befitted a Jesuit pupil. Yet, he sometimes felt lonely at the *Collegio Romano*, as is shown by a letter to his mother: "Signora madre mia cara", he addresses her, and goes on to tell 'Her Excellency' that he thinks of her; that she shouldn't listen to one Pietro,

³⁶ Peiresc to Barberini, 10 January 1625, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, f. 29^r.

who tells lies; that he'd like to write to his brothers, but doesn't have the paper. And now he has to stop and run off to class.³⁷

Part of his education, and of the program that guided it shows from the notes he made of his reading and of the lectures he attended. He was very well grounded in Greek,³⁸ which was not as common as one may think, and, of course, in Latin and in the principles of Roman and Canon Law,³⁹ but he also filled many volumes with notes on rhetoric, history and physics.⁴⁰ Sometimes, he found his lessons quite hard. He even tried his hand at writing poetry, though with obviously less passion than his uncle, who yet stimulated him to think along the same lines he adhered to himself: poetry should direct man from earthly pleasures to heavenly wisdom.⁴¹

In 1623, the year Maffeo was elected to the papacy, Francesco received his doctorate from the *Collegio*.⁴² In the same year, he entered upon his unexpected political and administrative career as the new Pope's closest collaborator, and, indeed, largely followed the routine mapped out in the manual: the daily visits to the Pope, the weekly consultations with the major officials of the Curia and the audiences with all and sundry. What kind of a man was he?

Psychologizing on the basis of portraits is always dangerous. An engraving showing him as a young man gives the impression of a somewhat brooding disposition. His portrait by Andrea Sacchi shows a rather older face and a lean physique, a man with a high forehead and a definitely beaky nose. A caricature by Gianlorenzo Bernini accentuates these traits, as well as his height. It is mainly through the generally biased, often critical and sometimes openly hostile descriptions foreign representatives gave of him that we know something of his alleged character. Especially the Venetians thought him choleric and melancholy, fond of delaying tactics.⁴³ Besides the fact that such behaviour showed good sense especially in dealing with the representatives of the *Serenissima* who tended to be both crafty and shiftily themselves, one might

³⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 10046, f. 1^r, undated, but probably ca. 1604.

³⁸ His exercises are in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6526.

³⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 1671.

⁴⁰ *BAV, BL*, Vols. 1244, 1252, 1726, 1727, 1758, 1826, 1827.

⁴¹ Maffeo Barberini to Francesco Barberini, 12 April 1614, in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 10088, fols. 61–62. Francesco's products are in: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 2067, 2068, 4726.

⁴² *BAV, Archivio Barberini (AB)*, Indice I, vol. 762.

⁴³ The characteristic given by: Hammond, *o.c.*, 26–27, is, I think, both too superficial and too facile.

speculate that it was the only logical outcome of an education and a training that—in its principles prescribed by the manual as analysed above—must have been demanding, to say the least.

That his training did help him in mastering his new functions may be seen from the following anecdote. In 1626, young Francesco was sent to Madrid, to help bring about peace between France and Spain, the perennial foes whose fighting greatly destabilized the Christian world and, moreover, consistently put the papacy in a difficult position. Whether or not his input was decisive, peace was, indeed, concluded, but on terms not previously sanctioned by the Pope. Francesco then had the treaty ante-dated, to imply that, whatever Urban might think of it, everything had been decided before his nephew's arrival.

The manual's influence over Francesco's life also can be gauged from the story of his life written, probably in the 1660's, by Antonio Spano, whose great-uncle Luciano Fabiani had been Francesco's personal servant from his student days at the *Collegio Romano* onwards. Spano himself also served the Cardinal, for no less than 24 years—even on this level, nice and possibly lucrative as well as influential jobs like these tended to be given to family members, of course.

Now, Spano's manuscript biography,⁴⁴ though sometimes erring on the hagiographical side, is interesting because it shows Barberini's daily routine, largely dictated by ceremony and etiquette. It also shows how this routine was shaped by, and conversely helped to shape the Cardinal's very surroundings: his 'apartment' in his official residence, the beautiful Renaissance Palace of the Cancelleria, both reflected and dictated his movements, and, of course, those of everyone around him. For young Francesco was the centre of a huge household, an establishment equalling the Pope's own court at the Vatican.

The manual written for young Francesco already had given ample thought to the gestation of the new cardinal's so-called "famiglia", arguing that if he were able to direct it properly, he would be likely also to succeed as the factual ruler of the Papal States. The writer reasoned that a person who was not a good 'economist', which, essentially, meant someone who was able to rule his (extended) house(-hold), could never be a good politician.

⁴⁴ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, Vol. 747.

On the various aspects of keeping court in its widest sense, both organisational and ceremonial, Baroque Rome has produced quite a number of treatises that all take a cardinal's household as the norm of proper behaviour. While mostly relying on the appropriate parts of the *Cerimoniale Romanum* that regulated functions at the papal court, they also dealt with aspects not covered by this obviously rather specific text.

If Barberini's manuscript manual does indeed date from his early years as Cardinal-*Padrone*, its prescriptions may antedate several of the more widely-read published texts of this intriguing 'genre', some of which, in their turn, may have been influenced by practices as developed at Barberini's court.

One of the central elements was the ritualization of food, which had started within the context of papal court ceremonies. Papal food culture was first extensively described and, indeed, codified by the chief cook of Pope Pius IV, Bartolomeo Scappi, who wrote what is surely one of the most impressive and magnificent 'cookery books' ever: the *Opera dell'Arte di Cucinare* (Venice 1570). His work was used by Vincenzo Cervio, the chief carver of Cardinal Farnese—the cardinal-*padrone* of the late Pope Pius III—, in his *Il Trinciante*, or 'The Carver', published in Rome in 1593. A new, augmented edition of the latter text appeared in Venice, in 1604. The functional interaction of these and other treatises about the various aspects of managing a courtly household then produced a really sumptuous synthesis in the *Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, Cuoco Secreto di Papa Pio Quinto, Divisa in sei Libri...Ristampata con due aggiunte, cioè, il Trinciante, et il Maestro di Casa*⁴⁵ (Venice 1605). In it, Scappi's 'culinary manual' was put in its proper, but wider ceremonial context, the context of the papal court, which considered itself the origin and fount of well-mannered, civilised behaviour. Inevitably, its rules would be adhered to in the court of the 'pro tempore' cardinal-*padrone* as well.

Both the success of and the need for continuous instruction in the field of ceremony and large-scale household management appear from the on-going production of such manuals. In 1609, an author rather too aptly named "Evitascandalo" wrote his *Libro dello Scalco*, published in Rome, outlining proper, scandal-avoiding behaviour for one who is assigned the function of chief butler in a noble household. Then there was Federico Sestini da Bibiena's *Il Maestro di Camera*, first published

⁴⁵ A reprint of Scappi's original text was published: B. Scappi, *Dell'arte del cucinare* (Bologna 1981).

in Florence in 1621, and revised in accordance with the *Ceremoniale Romanum* in 1639. And, finally, the most exhaustive and popular text of all was produced by Girolamo Lunadoro, whose *Relazione della Corte di Roma, e de'Riti da osservare in essa*, though perhaps written as early as 1617, was published in 1635 and reprinted several times, well into the 18th century.⁴⁶

In the edition of 1650, Lunadoro's work was combined with an edition of Sestini's text and with a booklet called *Roma ricercata nel suo sito*, which was Fioravante Martinelli's guide-book for visitors who wanted to explore Rome in ten days, beginning with the Vatican. Now, the system was complete: within the boards of one volume, Rome presented itself as the centre of the world, the normative force in European, Christian society, where proper behaviour could not but follow the examples given by its natural leaders, the cardinals, the Princes of the Church, whose natural leader was, of course, the cardinal-nephew of the pope.

Within this highly prescriptive culture, to establish his position as a cardinal and, moreover, as the new pope's nephew, young Barberini had been advised by the writer of the manual to start with a "famiglia" that distinguished itself rather by its quality than by its quantity. When his income increased, he could consider adding to his household. He seems to have followed this counsel. While in 1626 he employed 94 persons, in 1637 the number had risen to 134.⁴⁷

In their selection Barberini should take care to weigh such arguments as their origin. The majority should be from the Papal States, but some towns bred only ungrateful or outright querulous persons. Because of the ensuing jealousy, it would be unwise to give jobs to relatives of the servants and courtiers of other cardinals. He should take special care not to make one of his courtiers his 'idol' as this would arouse the jealousy of his fellow-cardinals.⁴⁸ This point is repeated else-

⁴⁶ *Kraus*, State Secretariat, a.c., 103, maintains that Lunadoro was a real person, and wrote his text in 1611, defending him against those who suggested that 'Girolamo Lunadoro' was the pen-name of Gregorio Leti, an author publishing on Roman affairs in the 1640s and 1650s who, by the 1660s, had become famous both through a series of sensational and best-selling biographies of all kinds of celebrities and with a number of titles in which he came out as one of the papacy's most vociferous and, one may assume, financially successful critics.

⁴⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 5635.

⁴⁸ Manual, chapter 105.

where;⁴⁹ though the author does not explicitly mention it, one might also think that this constitutes an implicit warning that such favouritism in an all-male establishment would foster illicit and therefore scandalous sexual contacts—in the 1630's, the allegedly homosexual relationships of Francesco's younger and far more lively brother, Cardinal Antonio Barberini, one of them involving his favourite male singer, were the talk of the town.

Indeed, when writing about the dangers of flatterers, who always will surround him, the author warns young Francesco that one of the signs by which he will be able to recognise them is that they will try to win him by dragging him into the pleasures of the senses, the delights that are less than honest.⁵⁰ Incidentally, we know that no women were employed in a prelate's household. A view of the kitchen of a cardinal, as presented in Scappi's treatise, shows an entirely male staff, too.⁵¹ In Barberini's household, the laundry, traditionally a female preserve, was therefore sent outside.

According to their social origin, the members of the household were divided into two categories. One group, actually the higher echelon, was termed 'of the gentlemen'; they might be selected because they were experienced in Humanist learning and the sciences, as, for example, the librarian or the secretaries, or because they were practised courtiers or simply because they were fine, upstanding noblemen. The very fact that at least part of his court was made up of such "gentilhuomini" should also dictate Francesco's behaviour towards them. Never order them around, never act imperiously. And allow them to intercede with one on behalf of their own kin and clients: it will only strengthen the basis of one's own power and authority.⁵²

This insistence on the role of well-born men, preferably of a noble background, and, therefore, of a noble nature, reflects the essentially aristocratic world-view of this age and town, where the gentlemen-courtiers even united in a professional pressure group—of which, by the way, Barberini became the first president.⁵³ In his later years, Francesco told his biographer Spano that, during the pontificate of his uncle, he used to let himself be advised by 'gentlemen' in all his artistic projects;

⁴⁹ Manual, chapter 105.

⁵⁰ Manual, chapters 123 and 125.

⁵¹ B. Scappi, *Opera* (Venice 1605), Book III.

⁵² Manual, chapter 118.

⁵³ Moroni, *Dizionario*, Vol. XXIII, 136–139.

they, rather than the ‘professors’, were the men of taste, who were able to distinguish between good and bad, whereas professors, fearing for their careers, would never commit themselves.⁵⁴

The other group of the “famiglia”, the majority of the officials and servants as well as the so-called “famiglia bassa”, though not normally of noble background, yet should not be recruited from the lowest populace, either.⁵⁵

The formal head of the household *largo sensu* was the *Maggiordomo*, who should be either a prelate or a nobleman with some authority. He would take care of everything, including the *Padrone’s* finances.⁵⁶ In this inevitably pyramidal household structure, the *Maggiordomo* was assisted by two other important men, each in charge of a one of the above sections of the “famiglia”.

The “Maestro di Camera”, who should also be a nobleman, was the link between the *Padrone* and his visitors. Indeed, it was he who controlled access to the pope’s nephew. Preferably, he should be somewhat older, an experienced courtier, who knew how and when to refuse people, whatever their position. He headed the corps of the “camerieri” and the “aiutanti di camera”, whose function it was to represent the *Padrone’s* position in the antechamber.⁵⁷

Then, of course, there was the *Padrone’s* personal administrative staff, consisting of one or more ‘secretaries of the personal correspondence’.⁵⁸ The “coppiere”, the cup-bearer, who deputised as “Maestro di Camera”, was a nobleman, too, with a small staff of his own.⁵⁹ The last official in this group was the chief carver, whose duty it was to manage the dining room and to oversee the kitchen staff.⁶⁰

The “Maestro di Casa” was in charge of all lesser personnel, of whom the book-keeper was the most important but who also included the lackeys and the coachmen.⁶¹

Architecturally, the *Padrone’s* direct surroundings were the expression of functions which dictated forms as well, both in Francesco’s official

⁵⁴ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, Vol. 747.

⁵⁵ Manual, chapter 113.

⁵⁶ Manual, chapter 105.

⁵⁷ Manual, chapter 106.

⁵⁸ Manual, chapter 108.

⁵⁹ Manual, chapter 109.

⁶⁰ Manual, chapter 110.

⁶¹ Manual, chapter 111.

residence, the Chancellery Palace on the Via Papalis, and in the family palace he built with his brother Taddeo near the Quattro Fontane, and of which, for some time, he occupied the right wing.

Especially the plan and, more specifically, the room-sequence of a cardinal's private apartments—which, by and large, were modelled on those of the pope himself—, originated, I think, in the days of Avignon. In the great papal palace constructed there in the 14th century, an intricate interplay between architectural form and ceremonial function had developed which, after the return of the popes to Italy, came to influence the layout of their residences in and around Rome.⁶²

Situated on the main floor, the “piano nobile” of the Chancellery Palace in Rome, Barberini's State Apartment was reached by a wide stair, from which one entered the “sala dei palafrenieri”. This room was followed by several anterooms, to one of which was attached a chapel. Here, on rotation, some of the gentlemen spent their days, honouring their master by their physical presence even if he were out or no visitors were in. Their many idle hours were wiled away with a game of chess, or with reading—nothing frivolous, of course, but serious topics only. This ‘limited’ occupation yet established their identity quite high in the hierarchy of Roman society.

From the antechambers one reached the audience chamber, on which opened the *Padrone's* bedroom, which was part of a smaller complex including a study, a gallery and a service room—as well as, according to Spano's manuscript-biography, a private oratory. Indeed, the entire bedchamber-suite was private territory. The gentlemen did not enter it, and even its cleaning was done by the ‘private sweeper’.

This context, both of persons and of spaces, was entirely structured to exalt the *Padrone's* position. Within it, his days evolved according to the schedule described by Spano.

Each morning, two hours before daybreak, Cardinal Barberini would get up. During Lent, he would rise even earlier. The priest Fabiani, who slept in a room connected to Barberini's by a secret stair, would be warned of Francesco's awakening by a bell. Fabiani then would go up to the Cardinal's “Camera”, the bedroom, and light the

⁶² I base this interpretation on my reading of: G. Kersch, ‘Privatraum und Zeremoniel im spätmittelalterlichen Papst- und Königspalast’, in: *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 26 (1990), 87–130, esp. 98sqq., in combination with: P. Waddy, *Seventeenth-century Roman palaces: use and the art of the plan* (New York 1990), chapter I.

candles to enable his master to wash his hands, comb his hair and get dressed, which he did all by himself while talking to his servant ‘on virtuous topics’. Taking a bath was deemed to be both unhealthy and dangerous because, in drawing too much attention to one’s body, it might tickle the senses.

After his morning ablutions, the Cardinal would enter his ‘secret room’ and pray there, facing a life-size statue of the Christ with a light constantly burning in front of it, while Fabiani prepared his private chapel for Mass—the Pope had allowed his nephew to say it before dawn.⁶³

Often, Barberini would weep during Eucharist. It cannot be ascertained whether his biographer here follows the tradition of late medieval and, indeed, also Tridentine devotional tracts. It is, however, not impossible that Barberini, who definitely owned and probably read such texts, actually lived the emotions therein prescribed. Thus, on Fridays and during Lent, he was wont to retire to his ‘secret room’, there to indulge in the ritual known as the “buona morte”, the ‘pleasant death’, a quarter of an hour of spiritual and perhaps even corporal chastisement.

Returning to his bedroom after Mass, Francesco would then spend yet another half hour in prayer. On Sundays and other festive days, the early morning routine was slightly different. He would say Mass in the palace’s public chapel, or go out to one of the many monasteries or convents of which he was titular head. Whenever he drove out, he would recite the Office of the Day, expecting his companions to join in the exercise.

Only after the second morning-prayer would Fabiani open the doors to the “anti-Camera”, and the chamber-servants would enter to dress the Cardinal for his functions of the day. Anything like a formal, ceremonial “lever” as practised at the court of Versailles at a later period was not deemed appropriate.

Probably following a light meal, the Cardinal would devote several hours to State business. The Congregation of the Apostolic Chamber convened in his rooms thrice a week, and that of the *Consulta* twice, besides the other ones of which the *Padrone* was president. Thus, Francesco spent every day of the week, Spano reports. And indeed, the sheer mass of State Papers preserved in the Barberini Archives show

⁶³ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, Vol. 747.

that being the Cardinal-*Padrone*—at least as Francesco conceived his role—certainly was no sinecure.⁶⁴

Letters came in from all over the world, and even though Francesco cannot possibly have followed the advise of his manual to read everything himself, he still had to go through the extensive excerpts made by his collaborators. Thus, to give but one example, we find one of them, Felice Contelori, advising his master on a wide variety of political-administrative questions. He writes about the transfer or dismissal of town governors in the Papal States—especially the ones who were not prelates, as they should have been, according to the manual. He also summarizes the many complaints related to the complex interaction of finance and jurisdiction, a matter in which officially sanctioned 'additional salary' often was turned into outright bribery and corruption.⁶⁵

Following some hours of work in the Congregations, the Cardinal would take a break to once more say Mass in the palace's public chapel, where the entire household had to assemble. Though priests were not supposed to officiate more than once a day, the higher prelates usually were exempted from this restriction. The latter half of the morning was spent 'in Congregation' once more, followed by the "pranzo", the day's main, midday-meal. Afterwards, on Fridays, the Cardinal would go to the Gesù, while on festive days he would, incognito, attend Mass at some Roman church or, during Lent, a service at one of the stations of the Via Dolorosa. During Holy Week, he would visit the seven main basilicas, going afoot as became, of course, a follower of Jesus.

We must assume that on normal days, after-dinner time was spent in a less religious atmosphere. First, there were lots of official functions to attend. Unless he wished to, as Cardinal-*Padrone* Barberini was not obliged to go out on the endless round of visits the rank-and-file of nobles and prelates, both Roman and foreign, were supposed to constantly pay to one another and to their betters. Nevertheless, being the Pope's right hand, he was among the main objects of these very visits. The ceremonies involved always were complex, and, moreover, time-consuming.

Thus, for example, when the Pope had nominated one or more new cardinals during a special consistory, the *Padrone* had to send his *Maestro di Camera* in his own coach to the residence of the lucky man.

⁶⁴ To my counting, Barberini's official correspondence numbers more than 300 volumes: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 5997–6336.

⁶⁵ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6462, fols. 132^r, 135^r.

This person would then come to the Cancelleria, where, on arrival, the *Padrone*, for once, would give him precedence. As the two of them left the “Appartamento” for the Vatican, the new cardinal would, as normal, cede to the *Padrone* again. After the ceremony wherein he received the red hat, they would return to Barberini’s palace, where the new ‘bearer of the purple’ would accompany the *Padrone* to the entrance of the “Appartamento”, before he himself went on to pay his respects to the Pope’s other relatives.⁶⁶

Another frequent ritual was the state banquets. The manual, in dealing with the functions of the *Padrone*’s chief carver, stresses the fact that Francesco will have to preside over formal dinners for cardinals, ambassadors and princes, as well as, preferably, allowing free table each day to his entourage. Therefore, the chief carver, besides having his own helpmates, should be assisted by a butler with some servants, a ‘private cook’, who prepares the food for the *Padrone* and takes care of the banquets, and other cooks who provide for the household.⁶⁷ According to Cervio, like the “coppiere”, the chief carver should be of good family, if possibly a nobleman—although, according to Cervio’s 17th-century editor, this situation occurred less and less, due to the miserliness of many prelates.⁶⁸ He should know how to mix familiarity with respect, both in dealing with his employer and with his fellow-members of the court. Most important, he should know how to move: when carving and when presenting the meat on his fork, he should raise his arm neither too high nor too low; when approaching his master’s table to serve, he should keep his head at a proper angle and take off his hat; when actually serving, he should put it on again.⁶⁹

With such stylisation—for each different viand demanded special carving skills and tricks—dinner obviously was meant to be a public manifestation, a theatre with spectators: the “famiglia”, the guests and, often, an even bigger number of, simply, spectators.⁷⁰

In the evenings, Francesco often attended one of the many musical performances he paid for, not to mention the sumptuous operas that were staged at his expense. The latter often were performed in his first

⁶⁶ Lunadoro, *o.c.*, chapter III.

⁶⁷ Manual, chapter 110.

⁶⁸ V. Cervio, *Il Trinciante* (Venice 1604), chapter I.

⁶⁹ V. Cervio, *Il Trinciante* (Venice 1604), chapters II, IV and VI.

⁷⁰ V. Cervio, *Il Trinciante* (Rome 1593), 104.

ante-chamber, for the benefit of a great audience.⁷¹ To accommodate all those who wanted to be present but who also, from the Cardinal's point of view, had to be present, in order to be 'fed' the political-ethical messages carried by these productions, performances usually were given on several evenings, with the first being reserved for cardinals, prelates and important visitors, another for the male members of the Roman nobility and yet another for female spectators. However, the Cardinal also liked to spend time listening to the learned papers given by the erudite members of one of the Academies to which he belonged or which he had founded himself: these, too, were often enlivened with music, sometimes even set to his uncle's poems. Amidst all these occupations, mostly public and semi-public, Francesco still found time to indulge in his private intellectual passions: he liked to delve into small, intricate philological questions, exploring unpublished texts,⁷² and in his later years, wary, perhaps, of a life of necessary intrigue and power games, he read the memoirs of Marcus Aurelius with the aim of creating an Italian translation which he actually published in 1675.⁷³

Everyone who came to Rome in a capacity that would bring him into contact with the Curia, was instructed not only as to his own behaviour but also as to the behaviour he might expect from those stationed above him. Thus, even the instructions written for the highest echelon, the cardinals themselves, held exceptions, viz. the behaviour they might expect from the 'cardinali-nipoti'. The *nipoti* never allow certain ambassadors of the second order to sit in their presence, whereas normal cardinals have to explicitly ask them to do so. The papal nephews never pay visits to other cardinals, unless of their own accord, to show a gracious, but not to be expected courtesy. The *nipoti* never go into mourning, unless for their own next of kin.⁷⁴ Yet, besides living by the specific rules regulating a papal nephew's life, the *nipoti* also were supposed to observe the rules that applied to the behaviour of a normal cardinal.⁷⁵

Consequently, in his contacts with the people surrounding him, the Cardinal-*Padrone* was not free to follow his innermost emotions; if they

⁷¹ Murata, *o.c.*, 223–224; 250 sqq, as well as: Hammond, *o.c.*, chapters 5, 8 and 12.

⁷² E.g. a letter to G.B. Soares, 3 December 1647, in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6517, f. 14.

⁷³ The manuscript is in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3896.

⁷⁴ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 13398, *passim*.

⁷⁵ Many of these are outlined in: *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 13398, f. 58^r, sqq.

had not been disciplined already from an early age, texts such as the manual would have taught him how to act, if only according to the expectations others had of him. The manual extensively analyses the way young Francesco should behave, both in proper, polite and politic speech and otherwise, including even his facial expressions and the use of his voice. Elsewhere, for example, it is said that a cardinal never employs the word “olà” or any other strong expression to catch the attention of his servants—he uses a bell or he moves his chair ever so slightly.

In this context it is important to realize that since the beginning of the 16th century, a great many treatises had been published on the topic of gesture, especially in the context of drama and the theatre. It was seen as a universal language that, just like music, had remained intact after God had destroyed the original, natural spoken language, leaving Man these means to express himself and be understood by everyone. As these languages, music and gesture, created and expressed emotions, “affetti”, they would inevitably invoke a response; their use, therefore, should be controlled. Especially the Jesuits—Francesco’s educators—were great advocates of these theories, which they employed in their educational practice that, of course, also included theatre.

In view of all this, following the advice of his manual and, perhaps, integrating it with his earlier training, Francesco definitely would know that in his contacts with his fellow-cardinals, he should not show his superiority as the Pope’s nephew. Rather, he should punctiliously demonstrate them the respect they, as his elders, deserved. Each dictum of the complex ceremonies that structured life at the papal court should be strictly followed. For was not ceremony the outward expression of one’s innermost thoughts about others? And, consequently, would not failure to comply with the rules of civility and precedence be rightly seen as the open admittance of emotions that should not be openly expressed at all? Therefore, such an act as, e.g., haughty behaviour was frowned upon—no wonder Spano specifically stresses the fact that, even to his servants, Francesco never behaved arrogantly.

Nevertheless, in this highly hierarchical world, with its highly stylised behaviour, as a group, the cardinals were a charmed circle. Very significantly, in yet another manual, a cardinal’s master of ceremonies is advised never to allow any non-eminent visitors to enter when his master is entertaining other cardinals, for ‘among themselves they behave

differently, acting only according to the dictates of their affairs and businesses, setting ceremony aside.⁷⁶

Though this seems to allow people like Francesco some moments of relaxation, I doubt whether the Cardinal actually availed himself of them. According to the original manual, with prelates, too, the *Padrone* should always try to use courteous behaviour that included not insisting on every act of reverence that should by right be accorded to him. Thus, for example, he might allow them to not take off their hats when he talked to them. He should realize their usefulness as informants about business of state; indeed, he might do well to follow the example of those earlier *padroni* who had ordered their master of ceremonies to invite one prelate to dinner every day. Thus he would accumulate a debt of friendship that would easily repay itself.⁷⁷ If only therefore, to keep an open table really was to be considered, for it made a cardinal's house into a "pubblica accademia", a "seminario de' Virtuosi"⁷⁸—and that, of course, added to one's consequence. Thus, the *Padrone's* court seems to have been viewed as an 'academy', where "virtù" was both displayed and taught.

Such forms of behaviour as affability and urbanity are essential, both in speech and in facial expression—again, the similarities with the rules guiding the theatre are obvious. Thus, one should be jovial in one's gestures, and smile when greeting someone. Never keep a person waiting, or interrupt him while he is speaking. In informal conversation, a certain facetiousness is perfectly admissible; it should be the effect of a course steered midway between the severity imposed by the monastic tradition and the lascivious utterances of a dissolute person.⁷⁹

However, when dealing with persons in an official capacity, a different form of behaviour is desirable. One should know when to give in and when to remain adamant, just as, in a fight, it is wise to let one's body go limp against one's adversary and, thus, take him by surprise. A vivacious way of speaking and acting will allow one to steer away from difficult problems one does not want to counter immediately. One should always take one's time and listen carefully to the arguments proffered by others; a slowly worded reply will be most likely to secure the desired effect. Again, these prescriptions show a definite analogy

⁷⁶ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 13398, f. 76^v.

⁷⁷ Manual, chapters 86, 88.

⁷⁸ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 13398, f. 79^v.

⁷⁹ Manual, chapters 89–90.

with the ideas worded in tracts on music: there, too, the “*affetto*” of the eloquent silence, or pause, is deemed very effective.

A spiritual prince, especially, will want to conform to the behaviour of one who, with a Spanish term adopted by the Italians, is described as a “*huomo verdadero*”, a ‘truthful man’: one who never says what he does not mean, nor promises what he cannot deliver. In so acting, one takes the middle road between forms of behaviour that, though all too human, are nevertheless undesirable. Many people tend to magnify things for reasons of self-aggrandizement, or, even worse, out of sheer desire to distort the truth. Others always minimize things, sometimes under the pretence of irony. The manual does not mince matters in admitting that in its most excessive and, hence, vicious form this behaviour often occurs in ecclesiastical persons, who, simulating humility, only hide their arrogance and pride.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, there is also a form of behaviour, and, hence, of thinking known as virtuous dissimulation—“*dissimulazione honesta*”—a term, I should add, that, again, was associated with the theatre. The manual’s author refers to Socrates who, in saying: ‘I know only one thing, that I know nothing’, was not speaking out of false modesty: he knew that in the face of God, all pretence at knowledge is vain. And when Plato reasoned that telling the truth sometimes might be harmful to the general weal, he was right: one may dissimulate, then, if in doing so one does not risk displeasing God.⁸¹ In this instance, some of the examples the writer adduces are telling indeed: when Charles IX of France lied to the Protestant Coligny and his Huguenot followers, he was virtuously dissimulating, but the lies of Henry III to the Catholic De Guise-family were, of course, the utterances of a tyrant. Other examples seem less obviously dictated by religious-political bias. For virtuous dissimulation also means accepting the mistakes of others, especially domestics, if they occur from ignorance, as well as refraining from constant arguing and wanting to be thought right.⁸²

One of the most important characteristics of a cardinal is that he knows how to keep a secret and yet to invite others to share their secrets with him. Obviously, the *Padrone*, the centre of so many dealings demanding the utmost secrecy, is constantly beleaguered by people swarming around the papal court eager to detect from his every word

⁸⁰ Manual, chapter 92.

⁸¹ Manual, chapter 94.

⁸² Manual, chapters 95–96.

and expression what has been said or decided. The best remedy for a young, inexperienced man like Francesco is to start with never telling anyone a single thing and thus to create a habit; also, when told a secret that he knows of already, he should feign surprise. Better even is to begin with refusing to be told any secrets at all. In doing so, people will come to think of him as highly trustworthy and, consequently, confide in him constantly.⁸³ A present-day reader may well be appalled at the less than 'open', less than individualistic, some might even say 'stunted' personality that, inevitably, would be the result of an education, a training even based on the above precepts. Yet it is precisely the kind of personality whose 'public persona', while dominating and suppressing any private inclinations, would be most successful in the power culture of 'Baroque society'.

Piety and patronage as politics: the roles of a cardinal-padrone

In his biography of Francesco Barberini, Spano elaborates on his master's many devotions. Once again, despite the obvious hagiographic overtones, these passages are fascinating, if only because they show how some of the ideas developed by Maffeo, and expressed both in his poems and in the Barberini Chapel, are reflected in the nephew. However, the realization of these ideas, through the kind of behaviour that was conceptualised in the notions of *liberalità* and *magnificentia* as described in the manual, demanded the expenditure of huge sums, precisely because a Cardinal-*Padrone* was supposed to be an exemplary leader in this field, too.

From the beginning of his pontificate, Urban treated his nephew as the head of the Barberini family, allowing, nay expecting him to direct the other members of the family both of his own and of the next generations, as Urban, while still Maffeo, had done himself.

Consequently, the wealth a cardinal could accumulate was to be added to the family fortune, though this needed a special papal brief.⁸⁴ And wealth Francesco did amass. His income swelled from his many functions—the ones of vice-chancellor of the Church, which he acquired in 1626, being the most important and lucrative, bringing in at least sc. 12,000 a year, followed by the post of cardinal-chamberlain,

⁸³ Manual, chapters 97–100.

⁸⁴ *BAI, AB*, Indice I, Vol. 762.

which also brought him some sc. 12.000 annually as well as a percentage of all cases judged and fined by the Apostolic Chamber;⁸⁵ on top of this came the pensions he enjoyed from the income of various abbeys and bishoprics, and the proceeds from the offices he could sell; moreover, he was given numerous privileges—such as the right to extract sc. 500 or more from the funds of each monastery, priory or benefice he held⁸⁶—as well as outright gifts of money, land, and precious objects. Consequently, he soon became one of the richest men in Rome and, perhaps, Italy. In 1630, the Venetian ambassador estimated his annual income at sc. 80.000; though the Venetians, never great friends of the papacy, may have deliberately erred on the far side, one may safely assume that from the 1630's onwards Cardinal Francesco could dispose of some sc. 50.000, annually—equalling an amount that would have kept some 500 families.

In view of this exorbitant wealth, it is not surprising Spano felt obliged to defend the system of nepotism, especially as embodied in the papal nephews. According to him, Urban could not well abolish the system without, explicitly, rescinding and even repudiating the decisions made by his predecessors. He also writes that Urban consciously decided to first create Francesco a cardinal, to make certain all other cardinals would know they had to thank the papal nephew for any favours received.

Spano went on to argue that, over the centuries, the papal nephews had been indispensable to the glory of Rome as the “reggia del mondo”, the royal palace of the world: their riches had given Rome its splendour, because they had built the churches, the monasteries and the palaces that now were its glory—significantly adding that without it there only would have been ‘the miserable architecture of the Goths, the vile representation of African barbarism.’⁸⁷ Also, Spano refers to Barberini's own ideas about the structure of princely patronage, and the artistic concepts involved, as voiced by the cardinal at a later age. As mentioned above, Barberini deplored the pre-eminence nowadays given to ‘professors of art’ as *arbitri elegantiae*: they are unable to judge the value of young artists, being always afraid to be superseded themselves. Hence they are entirely unfit to properly counsel a prince. Therefore, one should use ‘noblemen and knights, who give one advice

⁸⁵ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, Vol. 783.

⁸⁶ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, Vol. 764.

⁸⁷ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, Vol. 747.

on the basis of taste'; only thus one may be certain that the money spent is spent wisely, as it was during Urban's pontificate, with such men advising the Pope as Fabio della Cornia, Lorenzo Magalotti and Giulio Sacchetti—all of them prelates who, if I have identified them correctly, were given the red hat at some stage of their career in Urban's service.

As to Francesco, he did, indeed, sponsor 'young' artists. Thus, for example, Francesco Borromini, who had come to Rome probably ca 1620, and had risen to some fame as the chief assistant of Carlo Maderno, whose work on the new Barberini Palace he went on to finish after the latter's death in 1629. When, in 1634, Cardinal Francesco, responsible for the decisions concerning the new family palace, also started building one of his first churches, the San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, adjacent to the Palazzo Barberini, he gave the commission to Borromini. The reason why the Cardinal decided to become involved in the San Carlo-project probably was that since 1628 his confessor had been Fra Giovanni dell'Annunciazione, the procurator of the unshod Trinitarians who administered the church. Thus, San Carlo, which came to contain another Barberini Chapel, was paid for out of the Cardinal-*Padrone's* pockets.⁸⁸ Another commission that may have come Borromini's way through Cardinal Francesco was for the high altar and the Trinity Chapel in the church of Santa Lucia in Selci, that served the monastery of the Augustinian oblates, one of the Orders who were protected by the *Padrone*; the altar came out with the emblematic Barberini-suns all over it.⁸⁹ While this project started in 1636, yet another one fell to Borromini in 1638, when he was asked to build Santa Maria dei Sette Dolori, constructed on a plot bought with money provided by Cardinal Francesco.⁹⁰ Thus, the *Padrone's* pious obligations, and his piety, were nicely combined with the obligations and the magnificence of patronage.

Spano's description and, one must assume, interpretation of Francesco's life and actions is revealing on several other points as well. Analysing his listings of the great feats of Francesco's patronage and comparing them to the items that show up in the huge inventories and

⁸⁸ Pollak, *o.c.*, 40–44, which gives the account of San Carlo's building by Fra Juan de Bonaventura.

⁸⁹ P. Portoghesi, *Borromini nella cultura europea* (Rome 1964), 205 sqq.

⁹⁰ P. Marconi, 'S. Maria dei Sette Dolori in Montorio e il classicismo borrominiano', in: *Palatino*, series IV, 10 (1966), 194–200.

account books in the family archives, we can see that besides the huge sums spent on the family palaces, the opera house and the country villas, on the decoration of all these buildings, and on clothes and jewels, on books and objets d'art, equally huge sums were used to fulfil what Barberini deemed his obligation to religion.

Francesco's patron saint and, hence, special devotion was, of course, St. Francis, whose stigmata he particularly revered, as, according to his poems, did his uncle. Thus, he was the official protector of the Friars Minor,⁹¹ and gave precious altar decorations to the church of the Franciscans. He also had a new Franciscan monastery built near the Campo Vacino. Sumptuous reliquaries were made on his order to keep the Saint's habit and his blood. He also acted as protector of the congregation that promoted the cult of the stigmata.⁹²

Also, however, with the help of his special correspondent and spiritual adviser, the reverend mother Suor Francesca Farnese, he reformed the rules of the nuns of St. Clare and helped her build the monastery of the Conception of Our Lady in Rome, as well as convents in Albano, Farnese and Palestrina, the town where the Barberini's summer palace was built into the huge terraced structures of the erstwhile temple complex of the Goddess Fortuna. All these monasteries—which the nuns never left, being called the 'buried-alive ones' by the people; they did not even look at each other⁹³—Francesco used to visit several times a year. When Suor Francesca died, the Cardinal commissioned her biography from Alessandro Nicoletti, who also wrote the official biography of Pope Urban. The publication of the *Vita della venerabile madre suor Francesca Farnese* (Rome 1660) was paid for by Francesco as well.⁹⁴ It is a great pity that the letters which, probably, were exchanged between this remarkable lady—a nun-poetess,⁹⁵ whose praises were sung by her contemporaries⁹⁶—and the Cardinal-*Padrone* have not survived, as they would have revealed something of Francesco's personal piety.

Another of Francesco's favourites was Saint Sebastian, who was depicted on a fresco in a niche of the family chapel. For him he built a

⁹¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2136.

⁹² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4593.

⁹³ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 391.

⁹⁴ F. Petrucci-Nardelli, 'Il Cardinale Francesco Barberini seniore e la stampa a Roma', in: *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, CVIII (1985), 133–198; for this: 170.

⁹⁵ Francesca Farnese, *Pie e Devote Poesie* (Rome 1654); Idem, *Poesie Sacre* (Rome 1657, with two reprints till 1666).

⁹⁶ Only the first four books of the text were published. The fifth part, dealing with

church as well. Or rather, he and his brothers in 1624 commissioned Luigi Arrigucci to rebuild the ruins of a tenth-century structure connected with Sebastian on the Palatine Hill, in the so-called Barberini Vineyard.⁹⁷ Perhaps they were induced to do so precisely because in the family chapel in Sant'Andrea, though standing on the site of a former church devoted to the saint, Sebastian had not been made the centre of devotion after all.⁹⁸

The façade of the new church was positively covered in Barberini bee stings. Inside, all frescoes referring to other saints than this unofficial family patron were covered over, though they took care to have accurate drawings made which, incidentally, were used by the next Barberini generation some 50 years later to redecorate the church in the original style⁹⁹—a nice instance of Rome remaking itself on the basis of the image it conserved of its own past.

Another favourite Barberini-site was the one within the church of Saint Sebastian-without-the-Walls. Even before Maffeo's elevation to the pontificate, young Francesco used to spend many hours, there. It was, indeed, in this church that the news of his uncle's election was brought to him: according to his biographer, he betrayed no emotion whatsoever on hearing the news that was to alter his life as well.

Later, the then cardinal had a chapel erected there. During construction work, two crystal vessels were found, supposedly containing the Saint's bones; one also held some white liquid, that people immediately termed "manna". The vessels, to which Barberini now held the key, were incorporated in the church's main altar. The Cardinal sometimes used the "manna" to help ailing relatives. When construction of the church was finished, in January 1631, the Pope himself came to celebrate the first mass, there.¹⁰⁰ Significantly, the church was put in the keep of the Capuchins, the favourites of the Barberini family, especially of the Pope, who had a Capuchin for his confessor,¹⁰¹ and, of course, his Capuchin brother Antonio.

the miracles wrought by Suor Francesca, her visions and prognostications, did not receive the "imprimatur", because her sainthood was not acknowledged officially. The manuscript text is in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4529.

⁹⁷ W. Buchowiecki, *Handbuch der Kirchen Roms* (Vienna 1970), III, 837–842.

⁹⁸ See chapter I of this book.

⁹⁹ The drawings are in: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 4402, 9071.

¹⁰⁰ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 205.

¹⁰¹ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 224, mentions Fra Girolamo da Narni, who dies in the odour of sainthood in 1632.

Other examples of Francesco's piety expressed through magnificent patronage were the monasteries, both in Rome and in Monte Rotondo, for the so-called "Barberiniane", Carmelite nuns especially favoured by the family because two of Francesco's sisters had entered the Order.¹⁰²

A number of Barberini's actions combined piety with social or other politics. Thus, he paid for a number of doctors and for the construction of a pharmacy-cum-dispensary as well, to provide free medical care to the poor of Rome. Also, when, a few years after his uncle had died, the papacy got involved in the 'War of Candia' against the Turks, he came to the aid of Crete's Venetian defenders with a galley completely rigged and manned at his expense—some sc. 30.000. Again, in the 1680's, he paid for the upkeep of a foot regiment to help combat the Turks on the Balkans. Also, being the protector of the town of Ragusa—present-day Dubrovnik—, in Dalmatia, he spent a small fortune towards the rebuilding of the city when it was nearly totally destroyed in a heavy earthquake. At the other end of Christian Europe, he helped defend the cause of the Church through his generous aid to the English Roman Catholics, thus taking seriously his role as 'Protector of the English Nation'.

In the end, admittedly after having donated fairly impressive amounts of money to his surviving relatives, he did make the contemplative nuns of the last monastery he founded, that of Martha and Maria, at Fara, adjoining his great abbey of Farfa, his universal heirs: these two saints, whose praise had been sung in Urban's poems, obviously were held in high esteem by his nephew, too.¹⁰³ One may be certain, though, that the inheritance was not a large one, and also that, as the nuns were not allowed to own any stable possessions, they may well have come to an agreement with the Barberini-family who, as was often the case, probably paid them a lump sum in lieu of what Francesco had left to them.

Of course, confronted with all these acts of public piety, one might easily characterize them as outward manifestations, only. This, however, would be utterly mistaken, induced by the rather romantic vision of religious emotion as a private act that entered the perception of Christianity in the 19th century. On the contrary, within a culture that had religion as its fundamental and dominant system of reference, these

¹⁰² Gigli, *Diario, a.c.*, December 1639.

¹⁰³ *BAV, AB*, Indice I, Vol. 747.

very manifest acts were seen and interpreted—and should now be seen and interpreted—as the visual indicators of a person's essential, most intimate identity.

However, one also must realize that many people were quite aware of the strain caused by the obligation to never falter in the enactment of one's public behaviour. So was Barberini, himself, I think. When, as referred to above, in the years following his uncle's death and the—if only temporary—decline of his family's fortunes, he chose, precisely, to translate the stoical text of Marcus Aurelius that may well have been a subconscious reaction.

Yet, the death of Pope Urban, though closing the tap from which the family coffers constantly had been refilled, did not immediately rob Francesco of all the elements that had constituted his status and power. Several of his usufruct-possessions, including various lucrative ones such as his abbeys and bishopric, as well as his functions, such as his protectorships and, most importantly, his office of Chamberlain of Holy Church, were his to enjoy for life. Yet in the following years, he must have felt the change, because his erstwhile position as the almost all-powerful Cardinal-*Padrone* was now taken by the *nipoti* of the subsequent popes. I feel I am not indulging in any undue hero-worshipping in venturing the verdict that most of them were far more inept than he had been, to judge by the lacklustre performance of Giambattista Pamfilij, of Flavio Chigi, of Camillo Paoluzzi-Altieri.

Still, for more than thirty years, Francesco Barberini continued to make his presence felt in the papal capital, if only because he was the natural leader of a group of cardinals who owed their position to his uncle—that is, insofar as they lived according to the rules implicit in the policy Francesco had been advised to adopt, viz. to create a faithful following through the generous bestowal of favours in order to be repaid by life-long allegiance.

Conclusion: the very model of a 'modern' cardinal-padrone?

During the many years of their cooperation, Francesco's papal uncle came to esteem his nephew as highly as he had hoped he would be able to do when he first decided to select the young man to be his chief collaborator. Giacinto Gigli, who kept a fascinating diary of Rome in Urban's time, wrote: 'And the Pope said he had four relatives: one

was a saint, although he did not perform miracles (that was Cardinal Barberini); one was a friar, who had no patience (that was his cardinal-brother, whom they named San Onofrio, the erstwhile Capuchin); one was an orator, who could not talk (that was Cardinal Antonio); and one was a general, who did not even know how to handle a sword (that was the Prince-Prefect of Rome).¹⁰⁴ The report probably is apocryphal, smacking of the Pasquinades, the anonymous sayings that, in sometimes pleasant, sometimes bitter words voiced the opinions the Roman man-in-the-street held of his betters. But even though no one would ever describe Francesco Barberini as a saint, when he died on December 10, 1679, in his 82nd year, after having been a cardinal for 56 years, one might yet admit that he had been, in various ways, a rather exemplary Cardinal-*Padrone*.

¹⁰⁴ G. Ricciotti, ed., *Giacinto Gigli, Diario Romano* (Rome 1958), 215. The Bartolotti-edition—Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 364—gives a faintly different version.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRINCE ECKEMBERGH COMES TO DINNER, OR: POWER THROUGH CULINARY CEREMONY

Introduction

It is not often a historian finds the kind of sources that enable him to reconstruct past behaviour and, thus, to enter past man's mind. In papal Rome, with its emphasis on stylised acts and (e-)motions, the situation is slightly better. 'Baroque behaviour' as codified in prescriptions and descriptions of ceremony and ritual, can in fact be 'read' and interpreted. As ceremony was the lifeblood of the papal capital,¹ I have searched for a suitable case to analyse it in action, and have been lucky to discover one. The 1637–1638 mission of the Imperial ambassador Johann Prince Eckembergh—or Von Eggenberg—to Pope Urban has produced a relatively large amount of texts which allow for what historians of literature call 'close reading',² because they are what anthropologists have termed 'thick descriptions'. Multi-layered as they are, these texts yield fascinating information both on desired and on actual behaviour, thus illuminating an important aspect of culture in papal Rome.

Preparations

On the night of November 30, 1638, thousands of Romans flocked to the palace of the Spanish ambassador on the Piazza di Spagna. The austere but elegant front was ablaze with candles and torches; guards in ceremonial livery were standing at the huge vaulted entrance. The

¹ For a very general, but important introduction: W. Roosen, 'Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A Systems Approach', in: *Journal of Modern History*, 52/3 (1980), 452–476.

² This, alas, was not given by: A. Benedetti, 'La fastosa ambascieria di Gio. Antonio Eggenberg presso Urbano VIII', in: *Studi Goriziani*, 34 (1963), 3–24.

occasion of all this festivity was the banquet which Don Manuel de Moura y Corte Real, Marques of Castel Rodrigo, ambassador extraordinary of His Catholic Majesty King Philip IV of Spain, was about to offer to his guest of honour, the plenipotentiary extraordinary of the Emperor, Johann Antonn Fürst von Eckembergh and Duke of Krumau, as well as to the resident Spanish and Imperial ambassadors, Don Juan Chumacer and the Duke of Bozzolo.³ The banquet was one of the last festivities in a long series that had started more than a year before when news had reached Rome that Ferdinand of Habsburg had been elected King of the Romans and, consequently, would assume the imperial dignity, an event that had taken place in December 1636.

Yet, the times were sombre. Europe was involved in one of its most destructive armed conflicts to date. In the so-called Thirty Years' War, the Emperor and the King of Spain faced the French, the Danes and the Swedes, as well as the Dutch. For the popes, the religious balance of Europe was on the point of being definitely turned in favour of Protestantism—in their parlance: heresy. This meant their ideological and moral authority was at stake, as well as their actual power over the 'national' Churches in the various states of Europe, more specifically those in the Empire. The new Emperor's coronation, and even more the news of the agreement recently reached on the selection of Cologne as the seat of an international peace congress, had been greeted with great joy, not least by Pope Urban, who had been feverishly urging his diplomats all over the continent to work for European peace. This was especially important because the two needed each other now more than ever, having to combat yet another common enemy: besides the Protestants who undermined their power from within, they also faced the Islamic Turks who threatened it from without. It was precisely to prevent the Protestants and the Turks from taking advantage of the perilous situation of a Europe divided within itself that Pope and Emperor needed a show of both their respective power and their mutual cooperation.⁴

Perhaps to counter the prevailing pessimism, all those who had a stake in the felicitous outcome of a much-needed papal-imperial

³ The identity of the ambassadors was not revealed in the description of the banquet in note 69, *ut infra*. I have deduced it from: J. Pou y Martí, *Archivo de la Embajada de España cerca de la Santa Sede*, vol II, Rome 1917, vii.

⁴ For Urban's European policy see: G. Lutz, 'Rom und Europa während des Pontifikats Urbans VIII' in: R. Elze et al., *Rom in der Neuzeit: Politische, Kirchliche und Kulturelle Aspekte* (Vienna & Rome 1976), 72–167.

rapprochement tried to present as optimistic a vision of the present and the future as was possible. Indeed, for a month Rome indulged in a positive orgy of festivities.⁵ For when the news had arrived, on January 4, 1637, many of the imperial party's well-wishers decided to show their joy, and a series of celebrations followed, as Giacinto Gigli noted in his diary.⁶

The papal public orator—effectively the propaganda master—Agostino Mascardi published the speech he had given to an audience assembled in the palace of Maurizio, Prince-Cardinal of Savoy, the protector of the German Nation. An anonymous writer informed the public of the solemnities organised by the Duke of Bozzolo, the resident imperial ambassador. Such imperial allies as Cardinals Aldobrandini and Pio, as well as the administrators of the German and Spanish national churches also organised various public entertainments, whose descriptions were duly printed. Another nameless writer cleverly pretended to tell what happened as seen through the eyes of Cornelius Heinrich Mottmann, an influential person in Curial circles and, moreover, imperial agent in Rome, thus, probably, attracting at least a number of readers-buyers for his booklet. Antonio Gerardi, after going into details about the election of the new emperor, his coronation, and reactions to it in the German lands, described the wondrous fireworks and other forms of festive display that were staged on Piazza di Spagna, Piazza Navona and elsewhere in town. He did so in a text addressed to the said Cardinal of Savoy—a man, obviously, who had no need of such a description, but who served as the official recipient of a story which really was meant, again, to inform the Roman public, and, possibly, a wider readership as well, for a German edition was provided, too.

Whereas this last text was a mere twelve pages long, with an illustrated frontispiece, only, Luigi Manzini wrote to the Duke of Modena, describing the festivities organized by Maurizio of Savoy himself in a sumptuous book of some 160 pages, with eleven engravings showing the most spectacular moments. Giacinto Gigli, too, was struck by the magnificence of the occasion: a huge 'theatre' had been erected outside the Cardinal's dwelling, the Orsini-palace at Monte Giordano, surrounded by an arcade of 40 arches, each crowned with a short inscrip-

⁵ The following list is taken from: M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Bibliografia della Festa barocca a Roma* (Rome 1994), nrs. 129–142. The interpretation is mine.

⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 289.

tion extolling Ferdinand's many virtues; odoriferous water spouted from fountains on the piazza within this arcade. The first of February, a banquet was offered to the members of the Sacred College, and to the resident ambassadors, while the people were given free wine. The imperial ambassador acted likewise, with fireworks and other festivities.

But the Spanish ambassador tried to outshine even his imperial colleague, offering the public both a comedy, staged on the piazza in front of his palace, and a showering of money and pastries. The fireworks he organised in honour of the new emperor were such that they attracted a number of chroniclers, both verbal and visual. Ferrante Corsacci published a fourteen-page pamphlet, with four illustrations, in Italian. Albeit in Spanish, Miguel Bermudez de Castro did better, with eighteen pages and ten illustrations, engraved on the basis of drawings by no less a painter than Claude Lorrain (1600–1682).⁷ The inveterate, though critical chronicler of life in papal Rome, Theodoro Ameyden (1586–1656), addressed a twenty-page text to Cardinal de' Medici, adorned with 22 engravings, including five by, again, Lorrain. And, last but not least, for the avid collector some thirteen Lorrain-engravings of the fireworks were published separately.

To be sure, the Venetian ambassador who was present at the fireworks organised in front of the *Palazzo di Spagna*, somewhat spitefully but very significantly remarked that, surely, the symbolism of it all was lost on the spectators.⁸ He probably was right for, mostly, the intricacies of the ideological messages buried in this kind of audio-visual propaganda must have escaped any but the most learned among the lookers-on. Yet in this specific case, with the finale of the fireworks showing the cardboard King of the Romans who, sailing down, on horseback, from a tower erected in front of the palace, emerged unscathed from the flames and was reverentially greeted by the ambassador and his suite, hardly can have demanded great powers of comprehension. Giacinto Gigli, for one, very well understood what was meant,⁹ though it seems that a note of irony crept into his description—who was this would-be King of the Romans but a cardboard figure indeed?

Nevertheless, a massive propaganda campaign had been staged, which cannot have failed to impress the Roman public who enjoyed

⁷ Cfr. H. Diane Russell, *Claude Lorrain, 1600–1682* (Washington 1982), 366–390.

⁸ Cited by: Fr. Hammond, *Music and Spectacle in baroque Rome. Barberini Patronage under Urban VIII* (New Haven 1994), 228.

⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 292.

the bustle even though, as Gigli stoically remarked, many people were hurt and even died, 'as is usual during these occasions'.¹⁰ Whether they all consciously noted the great absentees, we do not know. Yet, the members of the Barberini-family were conspicuously lacking among the chorus of the new emperor's well-wishers. Those who were among the better-informed might have guessed the reason: Pope Urban was deemed to be rather more pro-French than pro-Habsburg and, at least on this occasion, made no bones about showing it.

Again, Gigli noted what happened. As one of the representatives of the 'People of Rome', he was told that the city council, too, would want to show its joy, perhaps prompted by the imperial ambassador who, for obviously propagandistic reasons, let it be understood that he was willing to share part of the financial burden a big public display would entail. But when the conservators sent one of their officials to the Pope to inform him of their intention, Urban haughtily replied that in Rome he was King of the Romans, and that they should on no account stage any festivities.¹¹ It is precisely this attitude that explains what happened in the following year.

For the time being, however, after Ferdinand's coronation, a lull set in. For collective action to be taken, the relationship between the new Emperor and the Pope had to be formalised, first. Therefore, Prince Eckembergh was sent to Rome. The official occasion was the ceremonial need to announce Ferdinand's election and coronation to Urban and to offer his obedience as well as formally ask for papal recognition¹²—a recognition that took the place of the coronation which no longer was performed by a pope himself. Hence, the mission, while really a remnant of an essentially medieval situation that did not reflect actual power relationships in Europe anymore, still was essential in an ideological context, wherein imperial policy should be sanctioned by the papacy. But despite these ceremonial needs, from the imperial perspective Eckembergh's mission was meant specifically to cement the Habsburg alliance with Barberini Rome.

The choice of Eckembergh for ambassador probably had been motivated by two arguments: not only was he the son of the late Emperor

¹⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 292.

¹¹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 292.

¹² I have used L. von Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, Vol XIII-1 (Freiburg 1928), 484-488, to reconstruct the general outlines that help elucidate the political background of the banquet.

Ferdinand's favourite friend and, indeed, unofficial prime minister who, incidentally, himself had been an ambassador to Barberini Rome in the early 1630s, he also was by far the wealthiest nobleman of the Austrian Habsburg countries. As was usual all over Europe, missions like these could only be entrusted to men very rich in their own right and, moreover, willing to gain or preserve royal favour by dispensing huge sums from their own coffers on their master's behalf. In this respect, at least, the Duke of Krumau did not disappoint his Emperor. Though, perhaps, lacking his father's political astuteness, the second Prince Eckembergh definitely could be relied upon to represent his master in suitable splendour.

However, despite his in the end gigantic expenses the ambassador did not, at first, succeed in securing a smooth procedure. Actually, when Eckembergh arrived in Rome on May 9, 1638, being met, at dusk, by the Cardinal of Savoy, as protector of the 'German Nation', and by the two resident Habsburg ambassadors, the Austrian and the Spanish one, he found that things had not at all been arranged as he had ordered.

He knew that much depended on the impression he would make, the need for a splendid entry having been demonstrated some years before when the newly-arrived Spanish ambassador, failing to stage the customary cavalcade, had completely fallen from public grace, thus dishonouring his master.¹³ Now noting that preparations for such a ceremonial entry had not been made, due, or so it seemed, to problems about his reception at the papal court, Eckembergh officially declared he would 'go on to Naples for two months'. Unofficially, however, he did enter Rome, leaving it to the other Habsburg representatives to convince the Curia that his demands would have to be met, first, before he would honour the Pope with his official entry.

In Rome, which considered itself the normative centre of Christian culture, the main problem was, basically, the age-old question whether or not the temporal would yield and even bow to the spiritual, viz. whether the Emperor would accept papal precedence as formalised in the rules codified in the *Cerimoniale Romanum*, which the papal court held up to all Europe as the model of courtly behaviour—it really should have the force of the Gospels, someone even wrote.¹⁴ After several months of diplomatic bickering, Rome agreed to accept one telling exception to its own rules: whereas other Catholic princes still were

¹³ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, July 1625.

¹⁴ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 7852, f. 448^v, sqq.

expected to pay their obedience to the Pope, the Emperor only was asked to present his 'observance', probably best translated as 'reverential attachment'.¹⁵ That problem solved, Eckembergh agreed to meet Urban. However, by now, Summer had started, and to evade the damp heat of the Vatican, Urban had moved, as was his annual wont, to his summer residence, the palace of Monte Cavallo, on the Quirinal Hill. Thither the ambassador would have to ride.

The first entry and the first audience

Thus, on June 18, 1638, Eckembergh officially entered Rome through the Porta del Popolo, amidst a great crowd of cardinals, bishops and noblemen who first conducted him to the Orsini Palace on Monte Giordano, the residence of the Cardinal of Savoy. From there he went on horseback to Monte Cavallo.¹⁶

Kneeling before the Pope who was seated on his throne, the ambassadorial orator delivered his speech and the ambassador himself handed Urban his master's letter, after having kissed it.¹⁷

This was the first of a sequence of actions and motions that in their origin we now can date back to the ritual originally developed at the imperial court in Byzantium, a conscious emulation and fusion both of the sacral motions used in church liturgy and of ancient Roman-imperial ceremonies; it was a ritual that, in this modified form, was taken over by the popes and, I would like to stress, from Rome spread over Western Europe precisely because Europe's princely courts adopted the culture exemplary set by the early 17th-century papacy. Thus, it became the behavioural norm of Baroque society, the society of the absolutist princes.

The process is clearly shown in what happened next. After the Pope had motioned to the ambassador that he might rise, Eckembergh assisted Urban in disrobing himself, receiving his ceremonial vestments before handing them to a servant.¹⁸ Obviously, we here see the ritual of the Mass introduced into profane culture, the culture of the court; it thus became a ceremony foreshadowing and perhaps even directly

¹⁵ *Archivio di Stato di Roma (ASR), Archivio Santacroce (AS)*, Vol. 69, 68^r.

¹⁶ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 12.353, fols. 137^r–138^v.

¹⁷ For the text, see: *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 8876, f. 202^r, sqq.

¹⁸ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 12431, fols. 29^r–32^r.

influencing the procedure adopted by Louis XIV of France at Versailles when he introduced the formal *lever* and *coucher du roi*. Allowing France's chief noblemen to dress and undress him, Louis clearly aimed at a sacralization of the king's person along the lines laid down at the papal court. The ritual was then adopted at other European courts as well.

Leaving the Quirinal, Eckembergh returned to the Orsini Palace, to attend an official banquet given in his honour. Yet, the 'many bystanders who, out of curiosity, came to watch this festive occasion',¹⁹ noted the ambassador's manifest melancholy. And they were right. The Duke was enraged. Enraged because, in retrospect, he was not at all satisfied by the ceremonies. He felt neither he nor his imperial master had received the honours due to them.

To start with, he should have been received outside the Porta del Popolo by the Prefect of Rome, Urban's nephew Don Taddeo Barberini, second Prince of Palestrina. Then, the Pope's other nephew, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the Secretary of State, should have led him into the official papal residence, the Vatican, where the Pope would have sat enthroned in the *Sala Regia*. Then, instead of only nodding to indicate that he might rise from his kneeling position, the Pope should have signalled him to do so in a voice loud enough to be heard by the entire audience. Urban should then have invited him to sit down beside him, in full view of the members of the Sacred College, seated as well, and of the other courtiers, who, of course, would have remained standing. These and other related grievances convinced Eckembergh that he should punish the Curia. Therefore, he ordered that the costly decoration of the palace of the Duke of Ceri, which he had taken as his official residence, be dismantled²⁰ and decided not to stage the traditional cavalcade that would mark his public, official entry in Rome—eagerly awaited by the entire population and of great symbolic value—until more adequate ceremonies had been agreed to by the papal court, incorporating all the details he demanded.²¹

What lay behind this seemingly grotesque pique? Apparently, it was all caused by Eckembergh's wish to present the Emperor—both to the papal court and to the population of Rome—as a prince who rightly claimed absolute precedence over all other European princes, most specifically over the King of France, one of the reasons being

¹⁹ *ASR, AS*, Vol. 69, 35^{r-v}.

²⁰ *ASR, AS*, Vol. 69, 61^r.

²¹ *BAV*, Manoscritti Chigiani (*MC*), Vol. N II 49, f. 523^v.

that the recently-arrived French ambassador, the Duke of Crequi, had greatly impressed Rome with his master's splendour and, thus, power.²² However, rumour had it there were other reasons as well.²³ Whereas the new Emperor did need the papal bull that would sanction his election and coronation, he was not willing to give in on an issue that had greatly bothered Rome, viz. the imprisonment of the archbishop-elect of Trier who, it was said, had conspired with the French and had planned to boycott Ferdinand's election in the first place.

A ceremonial society

Obviously, the ceremonial problems were real in the sense that they reflected equally real diplomatic battles over really serious political issues. Eckembergh's ceremonial displeasure had to be answered by the papal court. But it was precisely this court that, claiming the highest power on earth, considered itself the norm of civilised behaviour, of ceremony, and had created itself in such a way that a single foot wrongly set could spell ruin. The Curia, Rome, not only was a ceremonial society, it was a society that considered its ceremonies sacrosanct. From the pope downwards and, indeed, guided by him, the entire town, and everybody in it somehow was embedded in a series of ceremonies, that was dictated by the annual cycle of the Church's festivities—again, the festivities of a power that felt these were the ultimate festivities: ceremonies of joy, ceremonies of mourning, ceremonies celebrating life, ceremonies celebrating death—and, as a sign of hope and, consequently, an instrument of ultimate power, ceremonies celebrating resurrection.

As in imperial China and Japan, monarchies where the temporal was inextricably mixed with the ecclesiastical, the profane with the sacred, in Rome, too, there was a standing commission of cardinals and senior civil servants, in this case a specific department, or board, that dealt with all questions concerning rites and ceremony. Among this group, the real arbiters, those who had the heavy task of interpreting the time-honoured *Ceremoniale Romanum*, were the powerful masters of ceremony.²⁴

²² All this can be inferred from: *BAV, Ottoboniani Latini (OL)*, Vol. 2701, f. 62^v, as well as from: *ASR, AS*, Vol. 69, f. 90^v.

²³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 312.

²⁴ A list is in: *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 7930, fols. 188^r–189^v.

In this period, there were four of them, two senior ones, Paolo Alaleone and Carlo Antonio Vacari, and two junior ones, Gasparo Alaleone and Domenico Bella. With their own archive and with a voluminous library of ‘diaries’ documenting ceremonial practice and stretching back for more than a century,²⁵ which were constantly being consulted for precedents,²⁶ they were among the most important keepers of the papacy’s collective memory. Indeed, they were the choreographers of the ballet of papal power, being the ones who instructed everyone in their proper movements and behaviour, including, it must be realized, the pope himself. For not being, as in a hereditary monarchy, “porphyrogeneitos”, born into the purple, he too, on his accession, had to be instructed so as to behave in accordance with the honour of Holy Church, whose guardians the masters of ceremony were.

If only to smooth procedures within the bewilderingly complex structure of the papal court proper, guidelines were necessary. This court, with its *Mastro di Casa*, its *Scalco Maggiore*, *Forriere Maggiore*, *Trinciante Maggiore*, each with their assistants; with its Secret Chamberlains, Secret Chaplains and Secret Adjutants, and its Chamberlains of Honour; with its *Scalco de’Poveri* and his staff, who daily fed the dozens of poor people who ate from the papal table. This court, with its Secretaries of State, Secretaries of the Secret Letters, Secretaries of the Memorials. This court, with the General of the Papal Guard, the General of Holy Church, the General of the Papal Galleys, the Keeper of the Castel Sant’Angelo—all functions held by Urban’s nephew Taddeo who, for each of them, had a specific staff. This court, with its Cardinal Grand Penitentiary, its Cardinal Vice-Chamberlain of Holy Church—the Pope’s nephew Francesco Barberini—, its Cardinal Camerlengo, its Prefect of the Court of Grace and Justice. This court, with its dozen or so Congregations of Cardinals—this court simply needed regulations, and people explaining and enforcing them.

Consequently, to give but a small example, over time the masters of ceremony had compiled long lists which detailed the dress code for each and all of these courtiers—a code that, in the case of the ecclesiastical members, from the pope himself down to the lowest deacon, varied by the day.²⁷ Equally long lists spelled out the manner in which courtiers and visitors were to behave in the papal presence: how many

²⁵ BAV, *Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 12353, fols. 213^r–275^r.

²⁶ BAV, *B.L.*, Vol. 5009, *passim*.

²⁷ BAV, *Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 12345, f. 45^r *sqq.*

steps after entering the Papal Chapel, when to cover one's head, and when to uncover it, when to kneel, when to stand, when to sit—for the major ambassadors and the cardinals on their stools, and for important female visitors on their cushions, for only the pope sat in a proper chair.

Perhaps the popes themselves were the ones whose life was constrained most by the annual cycle of ceremonies, by the complex rules it posed on their court. Each day, and sometimes several times a day, they were dressed for the specific function they had to perform; they also had to be briefed as to the proper gestures they should make: for the normal papal Mass, for the special, festive occasions, for the public blessings, for the audiences, for the consistories, for the processions.²⁸ If they presided over a Pontifical Chapel, the dressing ceremony was a public one, and a bevy of cardinals assisted them in their vesting;²⁹ When they carried the Holy Sacrament, two cardinals supported their arms and the most important ambassadors of the European states present held up their robe.

Periodically, the popes tried to even more enhance their position as the rulers of the “caput mundi”, of their capital as the City Eternal that set an example to the world but also asked the world to accept and honour its pretensions: were they not emperors as their Roman predecessors had been, rulers temporal and spiritual? Was not their capital the living embodiment of an imperial tradition that set it above all the nations?

During the pontificate of Urban VIII, this wish resulted in two highly-debated decisions. The one was to raise the pope's “Fratres in Christo”—the members of the College of Cardinals, the successor body of Rome's ancient senate—to the position of ‘Princes of the Blood’. After years of discussion in the Congregation of Rites, they were given the title of ‘Eminency’, much to the chagrin of the ambassadors of the major Christian princes who now had to give them precedence.³⁰

Still more problematic was the decision to raise the Prefect of Rome—Don Taddeo Barberini, Prince of Palestrina—to a position in which he, too, preceded all ambassadors, following immediately after the cardinals. He even was given a headdress resembling an ancient mitre. The decision, as obviously political as the previous one, was

²⁸ E.g.: *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vols. 8429, 8430, 12343, 12345, et cetera.

²⁹ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 13398, f. 44^r, sqq.

³⁰ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 12345, f. 163^r, sqq. Cfr. *BAV, BL*, Vols. 1187–1189.

argued on the basis of extensive historical arguments, which, again, harked back to Antiquity, in once more stressing the continuity between imperial and papal Rome.³¹ The European ambassadors, on behalf of their masters, were enraged: now they, representing sovereign heads of state, would have to give way to a man whom many considered an upstart—as, indeed, secretly, these often haughtily-aristocratic gentlemen may well have thought each successive bunch of papal nephews were “*homines novi*”: they only owed their position to the chance election of their uncle to the papacy.

In the fiercely competitive milieu that was papal Rome, where every gesture had a meaning, denoted rank, the imperial ambassador, newly arrived from Vienna, had to find his way. Even though Eckembergh was not a boorish man—court etiquette in Vienna was complex, too, modelled on the Spanish example that, itself, had taken quite a few of its rules from Rome—he could not be expected to know all the niceties peculiar to ‘The Town’. An obviously knowledgeable anonymous writer surmised what, according to the “on dits” at the papal court, really had gone wrong.³²

As was customary, the papal masters of ceremony had carefully briefed the ambassador in the Roman rites. Eckembergh, after having knelt to kiss the instep of the Pope’s slipper on the embroidered mark of the Cross, would receive a short papal nod, indicating that he might rise to take his seat. However, the ambassador, for reasons unclear, had not seen the nod and had remained kneeling throughout the ceremony. Urban, bewildered—inevitably, he, too, was a ‘slave’ of the Roman ritual—, had been indecisive for a moment. Then, making the Sign of the Cross over the ambassador’s head, and following the disrobing ceremony, he had retreated into his rooms.

Not noticeably perturbed—or so people thought at the moment—Eckembergh had gone on to visit the papal nephews, which he certainly would not have done if he had been angry. Only later, malevolent persons suggested to him he had been grossly slighted by the Pope, and, moreover, in front of no less than twelve cardinals, a “corona”, the anonymous interpreter writes, a ‘definitely majestic theatre’—the legitimizing witnesses of Urban’s pre-conceived plan to humiliate him and his imperial master?

³¹ *BAV, B.L.*, Vol. 5009, f. 111^r, sqq.; drawings of the mitre: f. 108^r, 149^r.

³² *BAV, B.L.*, Vol. 5009, fols. 251^r, sqq.

In short, Eckembergh did not enjoy his food at the Cardinal of Savoy's marvellous banquet. Indeed, he sat there, contemplating whether to leave Rome during the night to return to Germany. Luckily, people succeeded in convincing him that such an action would be quite inappropriate and, indeed, counter-productive. But doing nothing would be equally unacceptable.

What followed was sheer theatre, too, the theatre of diplomacy. For over six months, high-ranking officials on both sides tried to find a solution that would satisfy both parties without either one having to give in. In Rome, a special congregation, a committee of cardinals was created to deal with the problem. In Vienna the Imperial Chancellery took over, acting on the basis of the ambassador's feverish letters.³³

The committee first gathered on the Saturday following the fateful Friday. Urban, who had been warned of the ambassador's wrath, offered to sign a declaration stating that he had indeed given the official nod that would have signalled Eckembergh to rise and take his coveted seat. The ambassador rejected the offer. In Vienna, this would be seen as an implicit admission that he had been unacceptably inattentive. Then the Pope offered a new audience, where four cardinals would be present. This, too, was unacceptable to Eckembergh: there were to be twelve cardinals, and he wanted to be loudly invited to sit.

By Sunday, the congregation dealing with this incident had grown to no less than twelve cardinals but even such a highly eminent number did not produce a result. Rumour had it that 'those cardinals who were *papabile* had felt terribly uncomfortable, for casting their votes they would have to keep the friendship both of the papal nephews and of the Austrians', an act of dexterity that was impossible, the more so as it now transpired Urban really did think the ambassador should not be allowed to sit, precisely because so many cardinals had been present. To have the ambassador sit during the Papal Chapel would be unacceptable as well: he should remain standing, albeit at the first step of the papal throne. So he actually was unhappy with the instructions his masters of ceremony had given.

Inevitably, the latter felt called upon to defend themselves: they could not have known that so many cardinals would have been present. By now, everyone agreed that 'these are definitely considerable problems.'

³³ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 12431, fols. 1–24; 27–28; 33^r sqq.; 37^v sqq. *Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 12230, f. 113^r. *Vat. Lat.* Vol. 13456, fols. 10–25. *Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 7852, fols. 448–484.

Monday morning saw the entire papal court breathlessly but not wordlessly waiting for a decision. None came. Repeating the audience, according to some, would cause damage to Rome's reputation, with its implicit admission that the Curia had not acted according to custom. The Pope's own honour was at stake: why should he stage a new consistory to amend for someone else's mistake? Others argued that a new audience would, on the contrary, increase Rome's honour, increase 'the majesty of the Church': the imperial ambassador would repeat his master's offer of observance, and reverence. Moreover, would it not be a fittingly benign act of supreme humanity to allow the poor man to redress the consequences of his own inattentiveness?

The case dragged on. People complained. Ceremony, which was of crucial importance, simply was not handled in the right way, anymore, because those who had the knowledge to make it function properly were lacking, nowadays.³⁴ Were scapegoats sought? I do not know. But I do know Paolo Alaleone did retire from the position of first Master of Ceremonies, though, typically, it was his nephew who succeeded him.

Yet, despite all these difficulties, a compromise was reached in the end. On November 7, 1638, Eckembergh entered Rome again.

The second entry

Many Roman nobles had come to the Villa Giulia, a mile out of town, where such cavalcades always assembled, arriving either on horse-back or, if they belonged to the higher echelons, in their coaches or sedan-chairs. Indeed, such coaches and litters sometimes were kept by the dozen by the wealthiest members of Roman society, including, of course, the cardinals, precisely for the purpose of adding lustre to these processions. Participating in it, as the envoys of Rome and of the Pope, they would honour the Ambassador and his master. As one of the Roman diarists noted: 'thus act the less powerful towards those in power; they give up their freedom for the chains of hierarchy'.³⁵ Could he have better summarized the transition from a feudal to a court society?

The same diarist noted that, on entering Rome, the cavalcade took care to pass through as many streets as possible, its specific purpose

³⁴ *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 5009, fols. 263^r-264^r.

³⁵ *ASR, AS*, Vol. 69, fols. 63^{r-v}.

being to impress as great a multitude as possible, for only in this way would the population be convinced of a prince's—in this case the Emperor's—power. In thus writing, this critic once more gave proof of the fact that contemporary observers analysed their situation using the same concepts historians and sociologists recently have come up with. The formerly independent nobility had lost its power; the time of the absolute princes had arrived; they had tamed the nobles, subordinating them to the rigours of court hierarchy; yet they also needed acts of not merely grand but also eminently visible propaganda to impress their power on the population.

Another perceptive diarist highly significantly praised Eckembergh's procession as a cunningly constructed 'secular poor man's bible'; indeed, though contemporary descriptions mention people's complaints about the quick succession of images that passed by them, it is quite obvious that Eckembergh's entry had been staged as a picture book with a definite political message.

The cavalcade started with a series of 60 mules, divided into five groups, each mule, caparisoned in solid silver, carrying cartoons depicting scenes from contemporary European politics. These were evidently meant to influence the public in Ferdinand's favour, which, effectively, meant to influence Urban to support the Habsburg cause against France. The wealth of gold brocade, silver, velvet and gems was loudly applauded as well.

Here, as always, we may conclude that such manifestations were appreciated on various levels, by various categories of spectators.

The overdose of riches impressed the world, the public at large, those who were illiterate, helping to bring home the power message to them as well. Yet, there also were those on whom the possible deeper reading of the twelve cartoons with scenes set in the Heavenly Rose Garden was not lost. Paradise might be regained, if a treaty would restore peace to Europe—a treaty that would only be possible if the Pope mediated between the belligerents, thus exercising and showing his supreme position also in matters temporal which, from the imperial perspective, meant that Urban would support Ferdinand's just demands. But a rose, just born, rapidly dies again in its moment of greatest bloom, one of the chroniclers noted, wistfully or maliciously.

This act of visual propaganda was followed by some military display: twelve German halberdiers, six trumpeters on horseback and 24 arquebusiers afoot. In this way, Eckembergh still managed to openly affront his host: his men marched into Rome with naked arms, a pre-

rogative belonging to a sovereign prince in his own capital, only.³⁶ Then came two companies of the papal Horse Guard, and eighteen palfreniers leading the cardinals' mules, sent to honour the ambassador; the animals did not actually carry their eminent load, the Princes of the Church, but their hats only. Two by two followed 24 pages, to introduce a great multitude of the Roman nobility. Behind the Roman nobles, suitably dressed for the occasion, came the members of the papal household, as well as some silver-clad mace-bearers; the masters of ceremony, with four palfreniers on horses of which even the hoofs were shod in silver; and the Swiss Guard, accompanied by some 30 of the ambassador's lackeys.

And then Eckembergh himself appeared, on horseback, glittering with gold and gems, assisted by two high-ranking prelates. The ordinary imperial ambassador followed with a huge multitude of minor prelates. Making up the end of the cavalcade, the ambassadorial baggage was shown, a costly display laden on a great many carts, which received 'universal applause'.³⁷ Along the way, two choruses sang hymns.³⁸ What sort of state music they performed I regrettably do not know. Even if the poet had been revealed, and thus, perhaps, the text and its propagandistic message, one might have searched in vain for the music: in 17th-century opinion, composers mostly did not deserve to be mentioned.

The procession moved on to the palace of the Duke of Ceri, situated by the Trevi Fountain, rented by Eckembergh for the duration of his stay. It had been sumptuously, not to say stupendously adorned both within and without. Indeed, such was the splendour of the decorations that numerous contemporary descriptions have recorded it, providing a clear picture of the purposes of this piece of propaganda. Rome had never seen its like, one of the chroniclers wrote, which, though perhaps exaggerated, meant something in a city where forms of highly expensive and yet supremely ephemeral architecture were erected for almost every festive occasion.³⁹

Just as in imperial times the trumpeters used to invite the people to attend the circus games, they now called the public to come and view

³⁶ *BAV, Manoscritti Chigiani*, Vol. N II 49, fols. 544^{r-v}.

³⁷ *ASR, AS*, Vol. 69, fols. 64^r-69^v.

³⁸ *BAV, OL*, Vol. 12, f. 146^r.

³⁹ For a survey: M. Fagiolo, S. Carandini, eds., *L'Effimero Barocco. Strutture della Festa nella Roma del'600*, Vols. I-II (Rome 1977-1978).

the 'glories of Caesar', or so they said—a fine and clever touch, I think, recalling that Ferdinand was after all the successor of those emperors who had held power over Rome long before there had been popes;⁴⁰ yet it may not have endeared him to the present Pope, who considered himself Caesar... Inevitably, for many days the streets around the palace were overcrowded with carriages bringing persons of quality to see all the splendour, while the common public gaped as well.⁴¹ What did they see?

The palace's façade had been artificially widened till it seemed twice its size. This cinemascopic screen then had been hung with paintings executed by the famous Bolognese artist Giovanni Francesco Grimaldi (1606–1680). The intricate iconographic program proclaimed one simple message, only. The House of Habsburg was hailed as Europe's corner stone from times immemorial, a power immortal going from victory to victory because all its actions were surely founded in Faith.

The central piece was a more than life-sized representation of the Emperor Ferdinand in a triumphal chariot drawn by four horses, trampling his enemies; Fame preceded him and Victory crowned him. The two flanking pictures acquainted the public with the conquest of Regensburg and the battle of Nördlingen. The four main windows of the palace were topped with portraits of former emperors. The entire composition was symmetrical, being vertically divided by enormous *putti* and tall columns. Allegorical figures symbolizing such virtues as Fortitude, Justice, Piety and Religion crowded the margins, lording it over such monsters as Heresy and Rebellion. In huge escutcheons the Donau and the Tiber rivers were depicted. Latin inscriptions in big, gold lettering also served to drive the message home.⁴²

The public was suitably stupefied. According to their mood, people were agreeably surprised by such intricate propaganda or, instigated by those who openly ridiculed it,⁴³ made fun of it themselves, jokingly offering alternative interpretations⁴⁴ that, in view of the Roman tradition in this field, may well have been of a bawdy nature. Some more favoured spectators were allowed entrance to the palace. Gaping at

⁴⁰ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 7852, f. 478^r sqq.

⁴¹ *BAV, Manoscritti Chigiani*, Vol. N II 49, fols. 566^r–567^v; *ASR, AS*, Vol. 69, fols. 95^r–97^v.

⁴² The text is given in: *BAV, Manoscritti Chigiani*, Vol. N II 49, fols. 565^v–566^r.

⁴³ *BAV, Ottoboniani Latini*, Vol. 12, f. 142^r.

⁴⁴ *BAV, Manoscritti Chigiani*, Vol. N II 49, f. 568^r.

the huge treasure of gold, silver, gems and rock crystal that filled the rooms, at least one observer remarked that it resembled Nero's Golden House.⁴⁵

Nine days later, Urban moved from the Quirinal to the Vatican, where he was to preside over a consistory especially convened to honour the Imperial Ambassador.

Therefore, on the 16th of November, all Rome crowded along the streets leading to St. Peter's, to see Eckembergh approach the Vatican under constant gunfire. People were not disappointed. In fact, stupefied once again was the word used to describe their feelings. The entire Roman nobility participated in what several observers did not hesitate to term 'a new triumph of Rome's greatness'. It is a sign of Rome's continuing self-consciousness that most commentators saw both the first and the second of Eckembergh's entries as a triumph in the classical sense, an act meant to honour the *Urbs* as the "caput mundi".

Although Gigli noted on both occasion that 'one had never seen anything more superb',⁴⁶ actually, many considered the ambassador's second cavalcade even more impressive than the first one. Judging from the descriptions, Eckembergh's suite wore some ancient German garb, reminiscent of medieval costume; should this be interpreted as a manifestation of growing national consciousness on their part? The public was much surprised though to see Eckembergh's followers dressed entirely in black and gold. One commentator ventured the interpretation that these 'funeral colours probably were intended to bring to mind the ancient Roman triumphs with their warning of *memento te hominem esse*'; also, the black was taken to symbolize the strength and stability of the empire, the gold its riches;⁴⁷ others thought the colours signified humility and wealth, the proximity of happiness and misery, a warning that victory could easily be followed by defeat.⁴⁸

This is precious information indeed. We do not often have several sources giving information about the reactions of the public to this kind of spectacle with the complex messages involved. Yet, such partly complementary, partly opposing views should warn us against easy interpretations. Relying on our iconological 'knowledge', we may think we can disclose the intention of propaganda. Still it will not help us reveal

⁴⁵ *ASR, AS*, Vol. 69, f. 90^r.

⁴⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 312.

⁴⁷ *ASR, AS*, Vol. 69, fols. 70^r-72^r.

⁴⁸ *BAV, Manoscritti Chigiani*, Vol. N II 49, fols. 551^v-553^v.

what actually went on in the observers' mind, whether the message was understood according to its intentions. For these conflicting texts are descriptions left by intellectuals, members of the cultured elite who were trained to 'read' allegories and symbols. In this case, a warning is all the more appropriate because, for all the learned speculation of these contemporary observers, nobody seems to have realized that black and gold were, simply, the Imperial colours.

The second audience, and the papal banquet

Arriving at the Vatican, there first was an official reception in the *Sala Regia*, the papal throne room where Eckembergh had wanted to be received in the first place, perhaps because he well knew the political significance both of the space itself and of the pictorial propaganda with which it was adorned. The fact had been borne out only two years earlier in a famous case. Following an official protest by the Most Serene Republic of Saint Mark against the rephrasing of an inscription added to one of the room's frescoes depicting the peace signed in 1177 between Pope Alexander III and the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, the Pope had refused to budge. Indeed, Urban had ordered the revision precisely because, historically incorrect, the old text emphasised Venice's participation in the treaty, even allowing the Republic a crucial role in the restoration of Pope Alexander to the papacy. However, the text always had been a much-cherished Venetian tradition, defended by its historians against all those who already had shown it to be a myth. Though the new wording was not at all anti-Venetian, the leaders of the Republic were enraged and withdrew their ambassador; only when in need of papal support against the Turks, in 1638, did they send a new one, while Urban allowed the new inscription to be removed, without, however, having the old one restored. Meanwhile, the rumour caused by the incident had reverberated all through Europe.⁴⁹ And of course, this specific fresco was not unimportant for contemporary opinions about the imperial dignity in relationship to the papacy, either.

The procedure followed for Eckembergh's reception was that which had been used six months earlier when he had visited the Pope at Monte Cavallo. He kissed the papal foot, or rather the instep of the

⁴⁹ Pastor, *o.c.*, XIII/2, 718–719.

papal sandal. Now, of course, Urban made certain that his nod was visible enough, both for the ambassador and for the assembled court—but speak up he did not. Yet, Eckembergh rose, and sat down on his stool, while his orator delivered the speech, and only rose again when the papal answer was read. Finally, the Pope gave Eckembergh the bull confirming Ferdinand's election. Once more the ambassador assisted the Pope to disrobe.

However, the consistory was now followed by a grand banquet. For those who think that such was normal procedure, it should be noted that it was not, neither then nor, one might add, has it been ever since. A history of papal public meals, though important from many points of view, has yet to be written. Some elements can be offered here.

As indicated above, papal court procedure can be said to have originated in its lasting form in Avignon. There, the increasing interaction between the popes, their closest collaborators and a throng of hangers-on who tended to become professional courtiers, dictated the regulation of vicinity and distance, the creation of an order, a hierarchy that came to affect both the way men behaved and the space in which they did so.⁵⁰ Soon, court life was regulated entirely according to the rules laid down by the papal masters of ceremony; their manuals give precious information about all aspects of what came to be considered civilised demeanour, including the 'culture of the table', with such fascinating elements as table manners.⁵¹

Following such scholars as J.J. Burckhardt and N. Elias, historians have told us that, if not originating at the smaller Italian courts of the Renaissance, etiquette, including table manners as manifestations of a process of individualization, can be first seen in France. However, I would definitely maintain one should go to 14th-century papal Avignon to find the roots of this process, if only because precisely at the papal court, the court of a religious prince, such 'affect-management' would have to be demanded of both courtiers and other noble visitors.

While the Avignon sources and, indeed, our information well up into the 16th century indicate the popes themselves did regularly preside

⁵⁰ On the genesis of court society: N. Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt 1983), 60sq. Cfr. also Chapter III of this book.

⁵¹ The most important manual has been published by: B. Schimmelpfennig, *Die Zeremonialbücher der Römische Kurie im Mittelalter* (Tübingen 1973). Cfr. also: B. Guillemin, *La Cour Pontificale d'Avignon (1309–1376). Etude d'une Société* (Paris 1962).

over luxurious banquets,⁵² it seems that both the frequency and the nature of these occasions changed during the later part of the century. The Vatican banquet for Prince Eckembergh is a precious testimony not only of what normally happened during these festive meals, but also of some new procedures introduced at this time.

One of the chroniclers writes that the rooms of the papal palace were filled with a gigantic multitude, if only because such occasions were nowadays rare—the Swiss Guard even had to make room for the Pope and his guests to pass. Such was the pressure of the people that the credenzas that carried the papal state plate were in danger of collapsing. One should not forget that in these times princely palaces still were by and large public domain, precisely because they thus fulfilled their propagandistic function as theatres of power.

In the dining hall, the Pope sat down, alone, under a canopy placed behind a table at the head of the room—in imperial Byzantium, too, the *basileus* used to sit apart from the other guests.⁵³ At his right hand side, and at a right angle, another table had been laid, at which Eckembergh and the regular imperial and Spanish ambassadors were seated. Otherwise, the room was empty in the sense that, just like the churches of the time, that had no seats, either, it only was filled with a huge amount of standing spectators, both the papal courtiers and the men from the ambassadorial suites.

As far as I have been able to make out, the dishes served during this banquet were simple. The Pope was always served first, and partook of the food first, too. Only after he had taken of a dish, the ambassadors ate themselves. At regular intervals, the Pope ordered one of his pages to carry plates from his own table to the ambassadors just like he used to honour banquets where he was not present, but which were of a suitably religious nature, with a gift of food, as if in a ‘take and eat’—thus, in September 1639, the Pope sent some precious food-gifts to the Roman Jesuits, to be included in the festive banquet staged on the occasion of the first centenary of the Society.⁵⁴ In the same vein, in imperial China, the Son of Heaven not only officiated at the various altars, but also participated in banquets where he ‘fed the

⁵² See for a specific case: M. Antonelli, *Alcuni Banchetti Politici a Montefiascone nel Secolo Decimoquarto* (Rome 1901).

⁵³ A. Vogt, ed., *Constantin VII Porphyrogenetos, Livre des Ceremonies* (Paris 1967), II, 102–104.

⁵⁴ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, September 1639.

earth', represented by the court nobles and the foreign representatives; he gave them the food from his own table, food that was deliberately sober, archaic.

Every now and then, the Pope proposed a toast to the ambassadors. At such moments, they rose, and uncovered their head; the other people knelt. During the entire meal, a choir sang, sometimes performing with a few voices, only, accompanied by the organ, sometimes with the full chorus;⁵⁵ among the compositions were two motets on texts by the Pope himself, set to music by Filippo Vitali (c. 1590–1653) and Stefano Fabri (1605–1657), as well as an Italian dialogue written by Urban, also with music by Vitali.

Obviously, this was no normal state banquet, staged according to all the demands of refined elegance and display of riches in food and utensils. Obviously, this papal banquet copied the liturgy of Holy Eucharist within an otherwise secular context—but was not the pope the prince of two powers, spiritual and temporal? Probably, the Tridentine need to sacralize daily life and behaviour had found a perfect vehicle in the papal banquets, the more so as, during the Renaissance, precisely these occasions had, according even to many contemporary critics, deteriorated into such manifest profanations of the papacy. Consciously or not, the 'new' practice harked back to the Ancient and biblical origins of festive banquets which lay in the sacrifice itself: both in the Old Testament books and in such texts as Hesiod's 'Works and Days' and Cato's *Liber de Agricultura* complex rules for sacral banquets were given.⁵⁶ Indeed, in imperial Rome the "eucharisticon" created the festive meal on the interface between temple and palace, specifically in the imperial precincts of the Palatine, as Horace's 'Odes' and Martialis's poems show.⁵⁷ Sacralizing the act of eating was, in a way, the moral justification of the violence represented in the consumption of the living organisms one had killed; gestures and prayers, indeed the entire ritualization now brought about this sacred character of eating.⁵⁸ In this perspective, Holy Eucharist was eating and drinking made divine, an act of love that both neutralized the contradictions inherent in the food act and united man made god and god made man in a mystical union.

⁵⁵ *Capella Sistina, Diario*, Vol. 58, f. 38.

⁵⁶ E. Grottanelli, N.F. Parise, eds., *Sacrificio e Società nel Mondo Antico* (Rome-Bari 1988).

⁵⁷ Horace, *Odes*, II, 3, 11; Martialis, VIII, Praef. and I. Cfr. also passages from Statius, *Silvae*.

⁵⁸ M. Montanari, *Alimentazione e Cultura nel Medioevo* (Rome-Bari 1988).

Transferring eucharistical practice to the papal banquet-scene, its sacralization also realized a profoundly Baroque ideal, giving a meta-physical dimension to the otherwise fundamentally physical act of eating.

Yet, from the point of view of the anthropology of food, the entire construction is a fascinating anomaly, running parallel with the even nowadays fundamentally religious dimension and implication of eating in many non-Western cultures—a parallel that, probably unbeknownst to the reformers of the papal banquet, brought them back to the real basis of the Last Supper in an originally anthropophagical culture.

However, without doubt the new papal banquet consciously incorporated yet another element of the great ceremonies of the Church, more specifically of the Eucharist on Maundy Thursday, itself a copy of the Last Supper: before entering the dining room, Pope Urban had washed the ambassadorial feet.

Not surprisingly, an official description of the papal ceremony had been ordered. In as many words the papal court indicated it intended to codify this new standard of courtly culture, now set by Rome once more. Yet, at least in Rome its style was to remain unique, as the person who presided over it was unique. As another banquet, described below, will show, the papal occasion was kept deliberately sober, precisely to set it apart from the manifestations staged by the Pope's subjects. Indeed, if one studies the entire phenomenon in its historical perspective, it would seem that while the state dinners of the Roman cardinals and the banquets of the foreign ambassadors of the 16th and 17th centuries had evolved out of the late medieval practice of papal Avignon,⁵⁹ contrariwise, the papal banquet of Urban's times was a reversal, perhaps one more intentional manifestation of the desire that permeated his entire pontificate to re-memorize ancient practices in their root forms both Christian and pagan, in this case recreating the banquet as a liturgy, the secular pendant of the Eucharist. In later pontificates, this idea was abandoned again; we know that Pope Alexander VII dined with his most important guest ever, Queen Christina of Sweden, even allowing her to sit at his side, and that his successor, Clement X, did so as well, even going to her own palace to attend such functions.

⁵⁹ A general description of Avignon practice is given in: A. Paravicini Bagliani, *La cour des papes au XIII^e siècle* (Paris 1995), 157sqq.

Continuing festivities

Next day, November 25, Eckembergh paid an official visit to Donna Anna Barberini, Rome's first lady as the wife of the Prefect of the *Urbs*, Urban's nephew Taddeo. Against prevailing custom, he brought his entire suite. Thus had acted the French ambassador, the Duke of Crequi, and the representative of German culture obviously decided to show that German *Höflichkeit* was not to be outdone by French *courtoisie*. Soon, Rome decided that ladies should indeed be thus honoured in future—another fashion had been set.

Incidentally, the public role of women was largely restricted to this kind of occasion, where they were given a function in the theatre of power. Otherwise, their presence in society now was far less visible than had been accepted in the preceding century.

The evening brought a new climax. Eckembergh was invited to attend a banquet given by the cardinal-secretary of state, Francesco Barberini, in his palace of the *Cancellaria*—to stage such festivities, the Apostolic Chamber allowed Francesco some sc. 3000 annually.⁶⁰ Reputedly, it was, again, a sumptuous banquet, now followed by a *comedia*, a performance combining theatre, music and ballet within a splendid setting aiming to create a *bel composto*. However, also performed was *San Bonifatio*, a musical tragedy first given during Carnival of that year, based on a text by one of Urban's poetic courtiers, Giulio Rospigliosi (1600–1669), the future Pope Clement IX.⁶¹ It had been set to music by Virgilio Mazzocchi (1597–1646), and been paid for by Cardinal Barberini himself.⁶² Precisely these occasions, that could give the illusion that the room and the audience as well as the stage and the piece enacted were essentially one, realized one of the favourite concepts of Baroque culture, the one that viewed life and the world as theatre and thus, in a way, as illusion, as vanity.

Rome was proud of its musical culture. One of the chroniclers, who stressed the musical elements in each of the festivities, rather smugly remarked that 'because of the continuous warfare in their countries, these German gentlemen were not often able to enjoy these kinds

⁶⁰ *Archivio di Stato di Roma, Archivio Camerale, Camerale I, Fondo Tesoriere Segreto*, vol. 1321, passim.

⁶¹ Murata, *Operas, o.c.*, 289–291.

⁶² The text is in: *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 10192, fols. 38–126; the music in *BAV, Ottoboniani Latini*, Vol. 3394.

of Roman pleasures'. As if to prove the point, Eckembergh also was invited to attend a performance of the musical tragedy *Il Sant' Alessio*. As a nice point of etiquette, it was this archetypal 'Barberini opera', written by Rospigliosi and composed by Stefano Landi⁶³ that had been originally performed in 1632, on the occasion of the visit to Rome of the present ambassador's father, the first Prince Eckembergh, and since proudly repeated for other high-placed visitors. Indeed, it was deemed important enough to have its "argomento", the outline of its tale, published by the Press of the Apostolic Chamber, and that not only once, but twice.⁶⁴

Giacinto Gigli describes the effect it had, 'with its many marvellous scenes that changed continually, showing palaces, gardens, woods, hell, and angels who, while talking, sailed through the air, and, in the end, a great cloud which, when it opened, revealed paradise'.⁶⁵ Rospigliosi, however, had slightly altered his original libretto, adapting its prologue—the usual moment to explain an opera's ideological meaning—to the new occasion.

Whatever the impact of the prologue's political message, the effect of the stage rising out of the floor was well-calculated to inspire surprise and, if perhaps silently-voiced, praise on the German company's part.⁶⁶ Afterwards, the composer Landi took the occasion to honour Eckembergh and, of course, himself, with the dedication of the sixth book of his *arie*.

After three more days of official meetings, such as the one with the German Nation in Rome, gathered in the *Collegio Germanico*, whose representatives also offered musical entertainment, Eckembergh's momentous visit neared its conclusion.

I was fascinated to discover that, perhaps to drive home the willingness of the Curia to collaborate with the Emperor despite Urban's French leanings, the Barberini brothers presented their guest with one of their prized possessions, a painting by Nicholas Poussin—a Frenchman working in Rome—showing the *Capture of the Temple* by the future emperor, Titus. This may have referred to Rome's primary duty to

⁶³ The libretto is in: *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 13538, fols. 270–326. The music was printed in Rome, in 1634.

⁶⁴ *Argomento del S. Alessio* (Rome, 1634; 1635)

⁶⁵ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 244.

⁶⁶ Murata, *Operas, o.c.*, 37, 291; Hammond, *o.c.*, 235.

defend the Faith, to combat heresy, as well as to the Emperor Ferdinand's duty to function as the papacy's 'military arm'. It is highly likely that Francesco Barberini thought he could not very well omit this gesture. He would be risking to affront Eckembergh and the Emperor who must have known that some years earlier, in 1633, another of Poussin's pictures, quite probably representing the same scene, had been given by him to the French ambassador Crequi⁶⁷—indicative of the political balancing act Rome was constantly forced to perform. Eckembergh also was given a second painting, by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli, depicting Lucrezia, probably while being confronted or protected by an armed man—the Barberini inventory which mentions this gift is not clear about this aspect. If so, this may have alluded to the city of Rome and, hence, to the papacy's need of Ferdinand's support in these dire times.⁶⁸

Whether or not on account of all these courtesies, Eckembergh seems to have returned to Vienna with a rather glowing vision of the success of his mission. Yet, one has to ask whether Urban was equally pleased. It is tempting to speculate that though Ferdinand only offered his 'observance' it yet was a minor diplomatic and, therefore, ideological triumph. However, future generations were given a different version. Albeit without further details as to occasion or date, one among the precious series of Barberini tapestries is catalogued as representing 'Pope Urban receiving the obeisance', suggesting the Emperor had not changed the old tradition. If it does refer to this occasion, it would have made a politically spectacular hanging for any of the papal reception rooms—not least for the *Sala Regia*.

A propagandistic display: food for thought

Let us return to Piazza di Spagna. On November 30, 1638, the Spanish ambassador extraordinary to the Holy See, the Marquis of Castel Rodrigo, offered his banquet to the imperial ambassadors: at the end of Eckembergh's visit, the Habsburg allies closed their ranks and showed their unity to Rome. An all too short, and not very illuminating, itemized description—more like an inventory—of the food served

⁶⁷ M.A. Lavin, *Seventeenth-century Barberini Documents and Inventories of Art* (New York 1975), 29, docs. 240 and 241. The Crequi Poussin is called "Presa del Tempio di Salomone"; it must be the same subject. Cfr. F. Vivian, 'Poussin and Claude seen from the Archivio Barberini', in: *The Burlington Magazine*, 111 (1969), 719–726.

⁶⁸ Lavin, *o.c.*, 36, doc. 282.

in the course of the banquet has been preserved in, of all unlikely places, the archives of the Papal Ministry of Finance.⁶⁹ This has made it possible to reconstruct—partly through an identification of the various foodstuffs⁷⁰—the presentation and especially the meaning of this night's feast. For there, all the above-mentioned political events were symbolically or allegorically recreated in the dishes served to the guests and displayed to the public at large.

Since, from the late Middle Ages onwards, it had become custom to use state banquets as propaganda and, hence, to invite as many spectators as possible,⁷¹ the doors of the frescoed state rooms of the Spanish embassy, including the banqueting hall, were thrown open to the public, too. After all spectators had flocked in, they must have stood agape at the magnificence of the spectacle offered to them. Even the dull enumeration of items in the document cannot hide the splendour. Arrayed on the tables and credenzas of the dining-room, where the twenty-four guests were to dine in public, were an astonishing number of *trionfi*, allegorical figures—mostly made of clarified butter, marzipan or sugar paste—whose meaning one can only guess by taking into account the evening's political background. Though the list gives one no clue to the sequence of the imagery, I have tried to reconstruct the scene as follows. For a scene it was, deliberately set by its architect—for that was what, according to Scappi in his treatise on the kitchen, was a cook's true profession: to build 'marvellous edifices'.⁷²

To start with, there was a life-size marzipan imperial eagle, displaying the imperial coat-of-arms on its chest, supported by two slaves made of butter, all this obviously honouring the new emperor, Ferdinand III. A Moorish slave-girl made of folded cloth—besides butter, marzipan and sugar, this was another material of which table decorations often were made—held a broken lance, while on her head a seraph sat, on whose head, again, an angel stood, rather awkwardly perched, I would say, clutching a shield with Prince Eckembergh's coat-

⁶⁹ ASR, *Archivio Camerale*, Series II, subseries 23, *Cerimoniale*, folder 2, *Banchetti*, nr 2.

⁷⁰ To gain some insight I have consulted, besides such obvious sources as the greater Italian dictionaries, and R. Tanahill, *Food in History* (New York 1974), the works of: L. Firpo (ed.), *Gastronomia del Rinascimento* (Turin 1971); P. Rigoli, *Cucine, Cibi e Vini nell'Età di Andrea Palladio* (Vicenza 1981); and O. Bevilacqua, G. Mantovano, *Laboratori del Gusto: Storia dell'Evoluzione Gastronomica* (Milan 1982).

⁷¹ Cfr. the examples in: M. Montanari, *Convivio. Storia e Cultura dei Piaceri della Tavola dall'Antichità al Medioevo* (Rome-Bari 1989), 483–488.

⁷² B. Scappi, *Opera* (Venice 1605), 1^v. On Baroque *trionfi*: J. Montagu, *Roman Baroque Sculpture* (New Haven), 190–197.

of-arms; the group was assisted by two figures dressed in green, representing Fames, with trumpets and the armorial bearings of the resident imperial and Spanish Ambassadors. Four cherubs, seated on an anchor—one of the elements of Eckembergh heraldry—raised another escutcheon with the prince's coat-of-arms. The country of the host was represented by a figure holding the Spanish royal arms.

Two Swiss soldiers—again executed in marzipan—could be seen brandishing their halberds, engaged in a fierce battle over the possession of a huge ham, glazed with sugar. This might refer to the struggle between the imperial army and the Protestant forces over the possession of the town of Breisach, one of the keys to the Empire and strategically situated on the roads connecting Spanish Milan with the Spanish Netherlands—a struggle which had started in September 1638, and ended, less than three weeks after the banquet, with the town's surrender to the Emperor's enemies, after four months of heroic defence.

A cloth-made bull held on a rope by a cowherd, was, in his struggle to get free, dragging the herdsman through the dust. But Hercules, miraculously at hand, held the bull by its horns with one mighty hand, threateningly raising a golden club with the other. This scene, too, obviously referred to episodes from the war; perhaps it symbolized the importance of Spanish aid—disguised as Hercules—to imperial policy in Germany. Or, as Hercules was one of the mythological figures allegorically used to represent Taddeo Barberini, the Church's general, it might have symbolised the importance of papal aid—though, militarily speaking, the papal army would not have been much help in any battle.

A butter Neptune was seated in an equally buttery shell, over the edge of which sea-lions were crawling. The shell was drawn by two sirens, probably to symbolize Spain's pretended mastery over the seas.

However, there were also three huge ceremonial 'salads', made of artfully carved and arranged radishes and turnips that adorned the table in their great silver boats. One represented the King of the Romans triumphantly driving a chariot drawn by four horses, with an attendant cherub holding the banner and the imperial crown. Another salad-chariot drawn by lions lustily trampled over the dead bodies of the vanquished, carrying Mars and the Spanish banner. On the third, under a gilded tree, a rustic lyre-player was accompanying a group of dancing country-folk. While the meaning of the first two 'salads' is obvious enough, that of the third one is not immediately clear; it might be interpreted as representing the general wish to bring peace to the war-weary peoples of Germany and Italy.

Another 'ensemble', of three shepherds dancing to the tune of a flute-player under a big laurel tree—the Tree of Peace—adorned with real leaves, must have enlightened the guests and the many lookers-on about the hopes held in Rome, Madrid and Vienna for the success of the negotiations with France and its allies in Cologne. Rather in contradiction to this, though perhaps more indicative of the real intentions of the allies, yet another group showed two mounted warriors, one of whom had just been felled and was about to be stabbed by the other's lance, demonstrating the hope that the fortunes of war might still favour the allies against France.

A representation of Religion holding a Cross and a Bible, worked in butter, was assisted by two cherubs, one with a map of the Papal States, the other with the Tables of the Law, the whole group an obvious reference to the rôle of the Church as a peace-making, law-giving mediator, with an aside to Pope Urban's efforts to preserve the territorial integrity of the Lands of St Peter notwithstanding the tumultuous times.

Smaller decorations, also illustrating the general theme of war and peace, included a marzipan Charity, in flowing robes worked in butter, pouring water from an urn into a shell held by two *putti*, and tritons riding a dragon, with cupids on their shoulders, each carrying a bow and arrows.

All these figures, whether made of butter, marzipan, sugar, turnips or skilfully folded cloth, were highlighted with silver and gold decorations, and raised on bronze-coloured pedestals that were adorned with scenes depicting episodes from the ambassadors' diplomatic careers.

The menu

The main table was laid with two cloths. The cutlery was covered with artistically arranged leaves, which, for the ambassadors, were entwined with gold thread. Next to every plate a gilded cup was placed, filled with fresh grapes and decorated with garlands of laurel and myrtle leaves. Side-plates for each guest were covered with figures carved out of butter, and with sliced winter melon on gilded leaves. The napkins were, of course, intricately folded and pleated according to the rules of the art of *piegatura*, which made them, besides the *trionfi*, into the highlights of table decoration.

Between the above-mentioned allegorical figures, however, which

most certainly were not prepared for actual consumption, and the food that may have given real palatable pleasure, there were a number of decorative cold dishes put on the table as well, such as grand pies baked in the form of roses and raised on eagles made of marzipan paste; poached and jellied capons, surrounded by figures of baked sugar; and larded turkey with *cannelloni*, all decorated with fresh flowers and taffeta pennants embroidered with the ambassadors' arms.

When the guests had entered, taken their seats and partaken of these cold dishes, probably to the accompaniment of music, the first course of the "cucina calda", the 'hot kitchen' was served, consisting, like the following ones, of three different dishes each. According to the Baroque predilection for the ritual effect of movement, the food was brought in as in a procession.

The four ambassadors were served individual portions, while the remaining twenty guests had to share a number of undoubtedly abundantly-piled plates from which they could fill their own ones.

To start with, the rank and file of the guests had *minestrone*, thick soup covered with artichokes, truffles (an expensive ingredient, even in 16th and 17th-century Italy, mainly used for royal tables),⁷³ pistachios and sausages, while the ambassadors' precious china cups were filled with broth of capon.

Huge chargers called *piatti imperiali* were laden with hams stewed in wine with herbs and flowers. Roasted sweetbread was garnished with throstles—two for each guest—and sausages, and covered with a rosette of buttered puff pastry. Plates with three capons each, boiled in a sauce of herbs and sausages, and garnished with boned golden-fried goats' heads—whenever such animals were served in their entirety, one may assume the architect-cook had used iron to wire them and keep them whole⁷⁴—completed the first course, which was accompanied by all sorts of confectionery.

The second course from the 'hot kitchen' served the guests roasted veal with whole kidneys, surrounded by grilled lemons and pomegranates. Star-shaped pigeon-pies were stuffed with minced veal, artichokes, truffles, sweetbreads and pistachio nuts, and covered with an 'imperial

⁷³ Tannahill, *o.c.*, 283–284.

⁷⁴ B. Scappi, *Opera o.c.*, Book I, chapter 140.

hood' made of buttered sugar paste. Leg of mutton had been roasted with juniper berries, and was served with little pies with pears in syrup and mashed prunes.

As a third course there were larded and roasted partridges under imperial crowns of paste, the plates' edges covered with pastry ornaments filled with blancmange; small plates with morello sauce came separately. *Capirostati*, a variable dish composed, on this occasion, of young turkey that had been larded and stuffed with pigeons and brains,⁷⁵ were dished up with a kidney sauce. A pie of boned and roasted goats' heads came with bread.

The fourth course consisted of huge plates, each with three *salami grossi*, sausages filled with tender chicken meat, which had been fried first and then covered with spiced and glazed pastry. A dish named *oglia pudria* was, of course, the famous Spanish soup *olla podrida*, noted for its many ingredients: it contained sweetbread, chopped cabbage, tripe, slices of beef, ham, sausages, onions and lentils, to name but a few—one will find a recipe in Scappi's treatise.⁷⁶ Young roasted turkeys were again served, this time filled with little pastry shells, stuffed with capers, pomegranates and quinces. On side-plates, Spanish olives came on a bed of cedar leaves.

The fifth course started with pheasants on a buttered pastry bed, and with *salsa reale*, a heavy sauce, to go with it. Minced sweetbread, mixed with truffles, ham and pine-nuts, was served in the form of a huge cake, surrounded by little pies. Iced tartlets of whipped cream completed this course.

Though still within the series of the *servizio della cucina calda*, the last course did not, in fact, include any hot dishes at all, but consisted of cold ones, served on express order of the Marchioness of Castel Rodrigo and prepared by her ladies: *ove misiche*, a very popular dessert of egg yolks beaten with rosewater, cooked in clarified sugar and then moulded into various fanciful shapes; some sort of rich cake, which went under the name of *Zuppa di Spagna*; and endless plates laden with spiced and candied sweetmeats. The fact that it was explicitly

⁷⁵ On the problems involved in the identification of *capirostati*, or, in Spanish, *capirostada*, see E. David, 'Savour of Ice and Roses', in: *Petits Propos Culinaires*, 8 (1980), 7–17, especially 10 and note 7, as well as: B. Santich, 'Capirattata and Capirostada', in *PPC* 12 (1982), 70–71.

⁷⁶ Scappi, *Opera*, o.c., Book I, chapter 142.

stated that these desserts were sent by the ladies seems to show that all the guests were male; it would confirm the notion that women were mostly absent from state banquets; if, occasionally, they did attend such functions, they often sat at separate tables.

Dancers who, apparently, had been entertaining the guests during their heavy prandial duties, now advanced to the table and served the gentlemen some of the cold and jellied capon which had formed part of the table decoration.

After the ambassadors' napkins had been changed—according to the procedure as outlined in Scappi's book⁷⁷—fruit was served, or, to use the proper term, the *servizio della credenza* started. The 'credenza', the ornamental side-board, not only had its practical use as a serving table, but also functioned as a showpiece, in this case for the Spanish ambassador's collection of plate: forty huge chased gilded-and-silver vessels with little silver-gilt cups hanging from the rim, and filled with an enormous quantity of all sorts of candied fruit and other assorted sweetmeats, partly white, partly coloured, were arranged in pyramids, producing a colourful and artistic effect. The sheer quantity of the candies denoted the importance of the banquet: other inventories which have been preserved make a point of mentioning the number of vessels filled with candy to indicate the size of a banquet.⁷⁸

The wine table—the *bottigheria*—likewise served as a status symbol, being loaded with a collection of precious glass, gilded wine vessels, crystal flasks, mother-of-pearl drinking shells and silver-gilt tankards, jars and pitchers, to hold and serve precious wines which were liberally dispensed.

For the *servizio della credenza* fruit and vegetables were piled up on individual plates at the side-tables and handed out to the guests. At the same time, more allegorical decorations were unveiled at the main table: three eagles, made of willow-twigs and covered with gilded myrtle leaves, opening up their backs to reveal quantities of fresh red medlars; three gilded towers of the same make, bearing plates with huge sweet pears—the towers, I feel, obviously referring to the arms of Castille;

⁷⁷ Scappi, *Opera, o.c.*, Book IV.

⁷⁸ Cf. *ASR, Archivio Camerale*, Series II, subseries 23, Cerimoniale, folder 2, Banchetti, for the description of a banquet offered to Cardinal Bentivoglio on September, 30, 1624, and of the marriage banquet of an unnamed prince of the Borghese family.

within three pavilions surmounted by imperial crowns ‘enormous red apples’ had been stacked. In the meantime the guests could take their pick from dishes with truffles, and of a concoction of milk and honey. Artichokes—the large as well as the very small ones—were served in gilt cups wrapped in napkins and laurel leaves for the ambassadors, and on big plates for the others. The fleshy, tender variety of sweet fennel was served in the same way, with dry fennel as alternative. Each guest could take two of the bergamot pears which had been piled on great salvers, adorned with flowers and gilded myrtle-leaves. Lumps of Parmesan cheese were presented in an equally decorative way. Plates of grapes and of big, syrupy quinces completed the course, as well as the dinner, for now the first cloth was lifted from the table, and on the second cloth silver basins were put filled with scented water, to enable the guests to rinse their hands. The ambassadors, of course, had their own individual finger-bowls.

All this, the compiler of the inventory adds in a short complacent note at the end of his list, was done with great pomp and circumstance, and amidst general applause ‘not only of the guests, but of all those who had trooped together to view the spectacle, which were many thousands of men and women’. Although the significance of some of the more intricate allegories must have been lost upon most of them, the spectators will not have lacked the company of a few men who were able, and indeed eager to explain even the minutest detail of the decorations and their meaning against the background of current politics. Clearly this ‘propaganda banquet’, as one may well term this gargantuan food-feast, had not been staged in vain. The power of the Emperor, and of his ally, Spain, and their role as protectors of the papacy, had been shown to a great many people. Nor did it take extraordinary powers of perception to understand that the two Habsburg powers had wanted to show the public the papacy could not very well afford not to join sides with them in the epochal battle for power over Europe.

Further food inferences

The significance of the inventory I have used as a peg for my reconstruction of this piece of culinary political propaganda does not stop here. It is also a valuable source for the history of food and manners in the first half of the 17th century.

Thus it is clear that in an age in which the consumption of meat by the population at large was declining steadily,⁷⁹ the rich were still able to feast on huge quantities of game and other meat, with the still exotic turkey—introduced into Spain, and Europe generally, from the Americas in the 16th century: thence its Italian name *pollanche d'India*—as one of the favourites.

One may safely assume that the origin of some of the dishes served during the banquet was Spanish rather than Italian: the *olla podrida*, the *capivotada* and the prominence of the turkey indicate as much. Probably a *chef* had followed in the ambassador's train when he left Spain to embark upon his mission to Rome. Certainly, any ambassador of the 17th century was as fully aware of the importance of an experienced cook as his fellow diplomats of later ages. In the 19th century, the Duke de Talleyrand, when preparing to depart for the congress at Vienna, stated that the first, nay indispensable member of any ambassador's household was a good cook. Even today, the importance of a more or less ceremonious dinner-party amidst the complexities of diplomatic life should not be underestimated.

Nevertheless, even though the marquess's *chef* may have been a Spaniard, the food certainly was not a fully Spanish affair. A comparison of the dishes served at Castel Rodrigo's banquet with the ones eaten by the guests at Cardinal Barberini's party earlier that week shows that the same ingredients turned up in the, probably, Italian orientated kitchen of the *Cancellaria*. It is hard to say whether this is an indication of the existence of an international, cosmopolitan cuisine geared to the fashions of diplomatic life, or of some now-vanished similarity between the Spanish and the Italian way of cooking; it is certain, however, that they resembled each other then more than now, if only because of the Spanish dominion over all of Southern Italy, Sicily, and Milan in the 17th century, and of the lingering Spanish preponderance in matters of ceremony and fashion in general, which, combined with the Italian influence, was only slowly superseded by the French cultural domination of Europe during the second half of the century.⁸⁰

The inventory, detailed though it may be as regards the decorations and the food, is not a cookery book, and accordingly does not

⁷⁹ W. Abel, *Stufen der Ernährung* (Göttingen 1981), especially 39–44.

⁸⁰ N. Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie* (Berlin 1975²).

offer any information about the actual preparation of the dishes, nor, more specifically, about the amount of spices, sugar and salt that were used. Thus it is impossible to determine what the various courses must have tasted and, more specifically, how heavily spiced the sauces were. We know that, until about 1500, sauces tended to be over-elaborate, more to show the host's ability to spend a small fortune on costly and rare ingredients than to produce purely palatal pleasure. The fact that information about spices is not given might indicate their diminishing importance. Indeed, the Italians were the first to stop cluttering up their food with seasoning and sauces, partly because of economic changes, such as the gradual closing down of the overland routes to the Orient and the Portuguese takeover of the spice trade. Thus, spices came to play a relatively minor part in the Italian cuisine, which began to rely more on indigenous materials—sausages, game, herbs, fruits and various cheeses—as the banquet of 1638 clearly shows. Though this may sound unlikely in view of the above description, the menu which resulted from these changes was simpler than its medieval predecessor would have been, if only because it relied on ingredients rather than on spices for variety and diversity.

Table manners

The inventory does inform us about table manners, although on this point, too, more details would have been desirable. Generally speaking, in the early decades of the 17th century, individual plates, individually served, were still reserved for guests of honour, while the 'hoi polloi' had to help themselves from a number of big plates strategically placed on the table. At this particular banquet, however, several courses were served individually to all guests, which marks a change from 16th-century procedure. The fact that it is specifically mentioned might indicate that this banquet took place during the process of transformation, which in later decades also led to changes of procedure in the countries north of the Alps.

The Italian word for cutlery—*posate*—being indeterminate as to the number of implements included, we do not know whether, at a banquet of this importance, a complete set of knives, forks and spoons was provided for each guest. More specifically, we do not know—since in Italy at least individual knives and spoons had come into use in the 16th century—whether each guest also had his own fork, instead of using

his fingers, as the Court of Vienna did up till 1651 or, for that matter, Louis XIV until the end of the 17th century; he even forbade his own brothers to use a fork when they supped with him, partly out of pride in his own mastery of eating soup with his fingers.⁸¹ It is, however, a well-known fact that individual forks first came into use in Italy during the last decades of the 16th century; this, as well as the circumstance that at our dinner a change of napkins is only mentioned after the guests had finished their desserts—which seems to imply that they had not soiled their fingers by groping around in whatever costly but greasy dishes they had enjoyed first—may lead to the conclusion that individual forks were indeed used.

The anonymous compiler of the inventory was undoubtedly quite right when he succinctly noted that everything at the Spanish banquet was conducted with much pomp and circumstance. If my reconstruction and the suppositions involved are valid, we may conclude that everything, from the table decorations to the food served and the manners displayed, was indeed of the greatest elegance and at the height of contemporary fashion.

Conclusion

With a meal that may well have caused him severe stomach problems, the visit of Prince Eckembergh to Rome came to an end. Nine months before his own arrival in the papal capital, he had sent a group of servants to make the necessary preparations. It was murmured that when he finally left, his embassy had cost as much as the annual income of a small state like Denmark or Scotland.⁸² Contemporaries estimated that on the Roman side, too, expenses had been staggering. In a way, this expenditure was reflected in the echoes of these really Baroque days, which resounded all over Europe. In many European libraries, manuscript collections hold descriptions of the Eckembergh ceremonies and the festivities surrounding it.⁸³ Moreover, a text telling the story of Eckembergh's entry was printed, both in Rome, and in Florence, in 1638, as *Descrizione della solennissima entrata fatta in Roma dall'eccellenza del*

⁸¹ F. Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life* (London 1981), 206.

⁸² *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 7852, f. 464^r, sqq.

⁸³ E.g. Venice, *Biblioteca Marciana, Manoscritti Italiani*, VI, Vol. 303 (5847), fols. 11–14; 14–24. The Hague, General State Archives, series *Added Mss.*

Sig. Duca di Cremau, Principe d'Eckembergh. All this 'media coverage' seems to have had an obvious reason.

Even during Eckembergh's stay, the ceremonial public behaviour of one power, the Emperor, elicited a reaction of another, viz. France, and vice versa, all within the context of and in interaction with Rome, the epitome of civilization. Thus, standards of Baroque culture were being set. They were codified in texts that could serve as points of departure and reference for future behaviour, as was especially clear in the case of the document made up to commemorate the papal banquet. Moreover, while it has been suggested that the change of collective eating to individual eating was exported to Paris, in the late 16th and early 17th century, in the bridal suites of the two Medici princesses who were married to the heirs of France,⁸⁴ I would suggest that the influence of such Roman experiences and texts as mentioned above played a significant role as well.

Obviously, these descriptions contributed to the genesis of a cosmopolitan culture that was accepted in wide circles precisely because it offered opportunities to express power and establish status. Parallel to the transfer of culture effected by, e.g., such a phenomenon as the Grand Tour, the rivalry that existed between states and was fuelled by Rome, that still saw itself as a culturally normative centre, continued to be a creative force. It was one of the important factors that helped generate a growing international culture, capable of incorporating new elements at any moment a new power presented the world with a manifestation of its own making.

⁸⁴ Tannahill, *o.c.*, 283.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BARE FEET OF ST. AUGUSTINE, OR: THE POWER OF RELIGIOUS IMAGES¹

Introduction

The real influence of the religious image is a phenomenon no longer easily accepted or understood. Even art historians, studying the greater or lesser religious art of earlier times, often seem baffled when trying to convey the actual function and significance of the frescoes, paintings and sculpture that used to adorn the walls of chapels and churches all over Christendom. We seem to have lost the key to the mentality that once invested these objects—form and content—with a function, with a message and, thus, with influence and power. If we want to understand this influence, we have to accept that language is both verbal and visual.²

Consequently, a historian has to read visual material—more specifically those products we commonly term ‘art’—as evidence both of messages intended and of messages received. People, and specifically people in Europe’s so-called Middle Ages, have always realized that the (religious) image was created to interact with the viewer, to carry a message and, thus, induce change.³ However, even if we assume that, quite often, donors or the artists they employed may have had definite intentions, we are confronted with the problem that, equally often, the

¹ It is a pleasure to acknowledge the critical help of some friends and colleagues, who read and commented upon the text: Prof. Dr. John B. Scott of Rutgers University and Prof. Dr. E.-J. Zurcher of Leyden University.

² A general introduction to the problems involved provides: R.L. Rotberg, Th.K. Rabb, (eds.), *Art and History. Images and their Meaning* (Cambridge 1988). I have further consulted the essay by: C.Geertz, ‘Ideology as a Cultural System’ in: D.E. Apter, *Ideology and its discontents* (New York 1964). See also: R. Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception* (Berkeley 1965); C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York 1973); R. Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (New York 1977).

³ E.g.: J. Kollwitz, ‘Bild und Bildtheologie im Mittelalter’ in: W. Schöne, (ed.) *Das Gottesbild im Abendland* (Wien 1954); H. Belting, *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter. Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion* (Berlin 1981).

image created is our main, sometimes even only evidence. Moreover, we should be conscious of the fact that even though well defined and intentional, the image yet may not have produced the desired effect within the chosen group of viewers. If it was a religious image, conceived as a traditional, stylised icon, it may have been read in terms of a particular context of scriptural, theological or historical significance. If, however, it was couched in a wider vocabulary, both artistically and as to content—even though that, too, may have been governed by quite definite conventions—the multi-valence of the message increases, and with it the interpreter's problems.⁴

The location of the case I propose to study here is Mediterranean Europe, rather in the Braudellian sense: Italy, Spain, the South of France, even Austria. The milieu in which it is situated is the Augustinian Order and, of course, the Roman Catholic world at large. The time is the pontificate of Urban VIII, i.e. the period of 1623 to 1644. Yet, the 'case' of the Bare Feet originated in the late 16th century, when part of the venerable Augustinian Order decided to reform its way of life and, with it, the way it chose to represent its saints. It lasted well into the 18th century. The main sources are nearly one thousand folios of assorted documents—memoranda, letters, papal briefs, the records of lawsuits, et cetera—illustrating a battle over religious images between two branches of the Augustinians.⁵

Prehistory

In the year of the Lord 1256, the numerous independent congregations that all over Europe adhered to the rule of St. Augustine, decided upon a 'Grand Union' and appealed to the pope to be constituted a veritable religious Order alongside the Benedictines, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The new 'Order of the Hermits of St. August-

⁴ A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins* (Princeton 1968); M.R. Miles, *Image as Thought. Visual Understanding in Western Christian and Secular Culture* (Boston 1985).

⁵ The manuscripts that form the basis of this chapter are preserved in the archives of the Barefoot Augustinians in the *Archivio di Stato* at Rome. The documents seem to have formed a file on the case of the images. However, there is no real system in them; some stretches of single sheets have been paginated or foliated, but many documents are not even numbered consecutively. When a particular document could be somehow identified, it has been referred to as: *Archivio di Stato di Roma* (= *ASR*), *Archivio degli Agostiniani Scalzi* (= *AAS*), 129, followed by either a page or a folio number, or the title of the document.

tine' soon experienced an enormous expansion: from 17 provinces with 12,000 members in 1295 it grew to encompass 40 provinces with 30,000 members in 1450. The addition, in 1401, of a 'Third Order', i.e. a lay congregation, with members both male and female, considerably strengthened its already impressive power in European society. Yet, like most Orders, it periodically went through a crisis, mostly caused by tendencies of declining religious fervour and discipline, which would then be countered by reformers who set out to combat such tendencies.⁶

In the late 16th century, the Spanish province of the Augustinians experienced a surge of reformist movements, perhaps inspired by the fervour of Theresa of Avila, who in the 1570's described the first two unshod members of her Carmelite Order as men who, entirely barefooted, walked endless distances through the snow to bring the Faith to those villages which were without any religious instruction.⁷ The new vigour amongst the Augustinians culminated in the provincial chapter held in Toledo in 1588, where Fathers Tommaso Alvarez di Gesù and Luigi de Leon presented their ideas for a more rigorous way of life, to counter the moral and material laxity that had crept into many monasteries. Within a year, the movement spread to Italy, and when in 1592 the hundredth general chapter was held in Rome, it was decided that the abuses rampant all over Italy, too, required the Order's many Italian foundations to consider whether they should not revert to a purer way of life as well. The reigning pope, Clement VIII, was enthusiastic indeed, and gave the movement his full support. What happened next is described in detail by the movement's first chronicler, Father Epifanio di San Girolamo.⁸

The first Italian monastery to embrace the new spirit was a Neapolitan one—i.e. in the Spanish-dominated 'Regno'—where Father Antonio Diaz realized the reformists' main ideas, viz. the renunciation of

⁶ Cfr. K. Elm, ed., *Reformbemühungen und Observanzbestrebungen im Spätmittelalterlichem Ordenswesen* (Berlin 1989).

⁷ The episode is recounted in: J. Smet, *I Carmelitani*, II (Rome 1990), 91.

⁸ For the first years, this text is fundamental: Rome, Archivio Generale degli Agostiniani Scalzi, Mss., *Croniche et origine della Congregazione dei Padri Scalzi Agostiniani d'Italia*. A mine of information is the chronicle of Father Bartolomeo da Santa Claudia, *Lustri storali de' Scalzi Aogstiniani Eremiti della Congregazione d'Italia, e Germania ... dedicati all'... Imperatore Leopoldo Primo* (Milan 1700), which is especially rich from the 1620's onwards. To be cited as: *Lustri*. Obviously, both these early records, however revealing and precious, and the modern history of the Unshod Augustinians: G.M. Raimondi, AS, *Gli Augustiniani Scalzi* (Genoa 1955), must be used with care. What follows is my interpretation of their information.

all material comfort and the strict adherence to those monastic customs that were believed to be sanctioned by the traditions of the early Church.

Already in 1593, the father-general of the Order officially approved the “*Congregatio Fratrum Discalceatorum Ordinis Sancti Augustini*” as a separate entity; by that time, they were mainly recognizable by the fact that they went about unshod.

In 1594, the inmates of the Augustinian convents of St. Peter-cum-St. Mark, and of St. Paul’s, both in Rome, felt that their way of life, too, bore little resemblance to what they perceived to be the intentions of their founder.⁹ Therefore, they decided to implement the Neapolitan reform as well and henceforth adhere strictly to the rule, dispensing with the frivolities of choral music, observing Friday fasting, keeping the discipline on the second, fourth and sixth day of the week, as well as, by way of an outward manifestation, once again garbing themselves in a very simple habit and enforcing the tonsure. Consequently, led by Father Agostino Maria della Santissima Trinità these Roman convents went over to the reformed branch. In 1597, when Father Agostino Maria was nominated vicar-general of the reform movement, he could count ten reformed monasteries all over Italy. Introducing the short robe of rough-spun cloth with the narrow sleeves, as well as replacing the shallow round hat traditionally worn by the Augustinians by a high, conical hat and at the same time greatly shortening the long beard, he made his brethren conspicuous. Such activities as tirelessly visiting the terminally ill and doling out bread among the poor soon made them popular.¹⁰ Yet, the initial enthusiasm of many fathers must have waned when they experienced the obvious rigours of the new way of life. Various influential Augustinians who first had fervently embraced the reform, now backed out, and a number of convents retracted as well. A split in the Order was inevitable.

In the meantime, Father Agostino Maria had recognized that in order to keep its momentum, the reformist branch needed a fixed set of constitutions circumscribing and ensuring its own, new identity. A draft text was made in 1595, discussed by various bodies within the Congregation of the Discalced Augustinians during the following years and accepted by the father-general of the Order in 1599. In that year, too, Pope Clement appointed one of his trusted advisers, the

⁹ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 597–640 give a rather garbled version of the entire episode.

¹⁰ *Lustri, o.c.*, 7, 14.

unshod Carmelite Father Pietro della Madre di Dio, to the new position of ‘apostolic superintendent of the Order of unshod and reformed Augustinian friars’. Father Pietro reigned with an iron hand till his death in 1608. It seems his efforts to monopolize power and, moreover, to reunite the Spanish and Italian reformed Augustinians with the main body of the Order met with various, not altogether positive responses. Among the old Augustinians, opposition to the new branch’s increasing visibility grew steadily, but in 1610 Pope Paul V, repeating decrees already made by Clement VIII in 1599 and 1604, did admit the reformed constitutions and officially sanctioned the authority of the vicar-general.¹¹

This virtually established the group of ‘Protestants’ as they were termed as an independent branch of the Order of the Hermits of Saint Augustine.¹² The traditionalists as they themselves claimed to be, henceforth were known by the name of “Agostiniani riformati” or—going as they went barefoot, only, which, however, in most cases meant besandaled—as *Agostiniani scalzi*, the ‘unshod ones’. I will therefore refer to them as Scalzi. The non-reformed monks continued to be designated as *Agostiniani conventuali* or *eremitani*, their traditional name, although to many contemporaries their way of life did not exactly recall the image of a hermit. Therefore, I will name them Conventuals

The only faculty still remaining to the father-general of the Augustinian Order, who always belonged to the older branch, was the appointment of a procurator-general, empowered every sixth year to act as visitor over the younger congregation. Still, on the occasion of such major festivities as the annual procession of the Madonna reputedly painted by St Luke that was one of the treasures of the Roman church of the older branch, the “riformati” dutifully followed the “conventuali” in their splendid progress through the ward.¹³

An outline of the case

In the course of this process of reform, an argument arose over the question whether or not St. Augustine and the other saints of the Order that bore his name could, or even should be represented barefooted—

¹¹ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 70–73.

¹² For the following paragraph: *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 597–640.

¹³ Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 172.

which could be besandaled or not—and in a hermit's garb.¹⁴ The seeming futility of the question is belied by the emotions it continued to stir up in large parts of Mediterranean Europe till the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, when decisions of Pope Innocent XI, in 1683, and Pope Clement XI, in 1717, finally settled the dispute that had been the outward manifestation of a deep-rooted and complex problem, that manifested forces both of continuity and of change. This struggle, lasting for almost a century, was punctuated by a number of acute crises.

In 1613, a first, small conflict foreboded the complexity of the later issues. The Capuchins, a branch of the Franciscan Order, brought the Scalzi to court because they had adopted the cone-shaped hat traditionally used by the older Order: this would rob them of their distinction, with all ensuing problems for their status with the general public. The two cardinals appointed to deal with the issue soon found out what had happened.

In the late 1590's, Father Agostino Maria, visiting the sacristan of St. Peter's, was struck by an old painting of St. Augustine on the wall of his office. In it, the saint wore a high, conical hat. Hence, Father Agostino Maria immediately decreed that the reformed Augustinians should adopt it as well; its usage soon spread among the Scalzi all over Italy. Now, the cardinals asked the Capuchin plaintiff whether he could describe the difference between the habit of his Order, and the garb of the Scalzi. Rather foolishly, the man eagerly proceeded to give a detailed description of the differences, including the fact that his hat was considerably higher than his opponent's. One almost can imagine the serene smiles on the faces of their Eminencies: this had been easy. They decreed that the Capuchins, instead of creating unnecessary scandal, should refrain from stirring up disorder, and asked the Scalzi to consider slightly diminishing the height of their hats; this implicit order was complied with during the general chapter of 1615, when a maximum height of 33 centimetres was adopted.¹⁵

But whereas this had been an easy victory, things soon got more difficult. In 1615, the Scalzi opened a new monastery, and adjacent church, on the prestigious Roman Corso, dedicated to Jesus and Mary.¹⁶ This

¹⁴ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 68–69 sum up the argument.

¹⁵ *Lustri, o.c.*, 5, 67.

¹⁶ *Lustri, o.c.*, 97.

may have fired the Conventuals' jealousy. For in the same year, the cardinal-vicar of Rome, Garzia Millini, was confronted with a plea of the Conventuals—informed by the visitor—who asked for a ruling forbidding the Scalzi to 'depict and sculpt' the images of St. Augustine and the other Augustinian saints barefoot and in a reformed habit.¹⁷ The Scalzi, however, argued that not only did they not violate the canons of the Council of Trent, which had been cited by the Conventuals, they also followed a centuries' old iconographical tradition. Dozens of letters and petitions from all over Italy, as well as from Spain, poured into Millini's office in support of either contestant.¹⁸ Cardinal Millini finally judged that the case had better be suspended.

So was a later one, brought before the ecclesiastical courts in 1620, although by then the accusations were more serious. For now the Conventuals maintained that the constitutions of the Scalzi were invalid and, moreover, that their decision to follow the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas in everything but his opinion on the Immaculate Conception went against received wisdom in the Church, since they emphatically did state that the Virgin had been conceived free of original sin—on this issue the Scalzi held with St. Augustine.

Problems really started in the pontificate of Urban VIII. In the 1620's and the early 1630's, various onslaughts by the Conventuals on the position of the Scalzi were warded off, and various successes booked. Thus, Pope Urban, acting against the Conventuals' vociferous protests, allowed the Scalzi to carry their own, distinctive cross in public processions that, obviously, increased their profile amidst the proliferation of religious Orders who participated in such ceremonies.¹⁹ This created an uproar; but, apparently, after some deliberations a semblance of quiet returned: on behalf of the Pope, Cardinal Francesco Barberini wrote to the father-general of the Scalzi to express his joy and confer the papal blessing.²⁰ Also, in 1630, Urban recognised the Scalzi's constitutions, which had been promulgated in 1620. One of the stipulations in the text was that the fathers would not wear shoes, "caligas", but go about "nudipedes", which, basically, meant in 'sandals, after the manner of the Apostles'.²¹

¹⁷ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 465sqq.

¹⁸ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 30–40 passim.

¹⁹ *Lustri, o.c.*, 320.

²⁰ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6260, f. 141^{r-v}, 12 July 1629.

²¹ The manuscript text is in: *ASR, AS*, Vol. 130. The text, first printed in 1622, was now reprinted: *Constitutiones Fratrum Eremitarum Discalceatorum Sancti Augustini Italiae* (Rome 1632). For the shoes: *Pars prima, caput XII–II*.

However, in 1637, a friar of the Scalzi-branch published an engraving of St. Nicholas of Tolentino based on the saint's picture that, at that time, seems to have adorned the main altar of the eponymous Roman church at Capo le Case; apparently, it showed the Saint barefooted, and added an inscription which read 'St. Nicholas of Tolentino, barefooted hermit of St. Augustine'. The Conventuals immediately protested, arguing the public was misled by the suggestion that the original painting was identical to the engraving. Upon request, the *Maestro del Sacro Palazzo*, the papal chamberlain and chief censor, ordered that distribution of the engraving be stopped. The Conventuals were not satisfied, however, and asked for a decree of the Congregation of Rites to ban all images that represented Augustinian saints in a reformed habit.

As was normal procedure in each of the fourteen congregations, or ministries, that administered the Papal States and the Church, a cardinal of the Rites' Congregation was asked to prepare a memorial about the case at hand. On the basis of a dossier compiled by Cardinal Verospi, the members of the Congregation then proceeded with their deliberations. The absence of the gouty Cardinal Pio at the final, voting session on December 19, 1637 resulted in a decision favouring the Coventuals, which was then routinely confirmed by Pope Urban on January 23, 1638.²² Furious, the Scalzi, who had not been heard at all, now asked that the decree be revoked, a request that was granted on March 13, 1638. It is unclear whether this strange sequence of at least seemingly contradictory decisions was due to Urban's personal interference, once he had realized what was at stake, ideologically speaking. However, such a possibility cannot be ruled out.

Undeniably, from the beginning, Urban and his nephew Francesco had shown the Scalzi their favour. True, their first sympathies must have lain with the Franciscans and, more specifically, with the most severe branch of that order, the Capuchins, who were unshod and wore sandals as well. The Barberini family had a long tradition of naming their male offspring Francesco or Antonio, and in the Pope's own generation his brother, Cardinal Antonio the Elder, was a Capuchin, much revered by Urban for his ascetic way of life in the wake of the barefooted St. Francis, whom he also held up as the ideal of human behaviour in his poems.²³ This fact was well known; indeed, one of the

²² *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 547 sqq.

²³ Maffeo Barberini, *Poemata*, 167–169.

few letters from Urban's private epistolary to be published during his lifetime was an admiring letter to his brother, dating from the earliest days of his pontificate, in which he lauded those who adhered to a strict interpretation of the Franciscan discipline, which, he wrote, offered him great consolation. Significantly, the letter was published in Cologne in 1640, with a long tract *De vera habitus forma a seraphico B.P. Francisco instituta demonstrationes XI figuris aereis ad Urbanum VIII Pont. Max.*, by the definer-general of the Capuchins, which exactly mirrors the arguments put forward by the Scalzi in these years.²⁴ Among the papal poems published in Rome was a text expressing the Pope's admiration for the virtues of the Capuchins, through the vision of a young man about to enter the novitiate.²⁵

Also, in St. Peter's, Urban continued the dedication of the *Capella del Coro* to Sts. Francis, Anthony and the Immaculate Conception originally willed by Pope Sixtus V. Young Francesco, too, was known to appreciate those branches of the Franciscan order that kept to the narrow road. Being the protector of the English Catholic Church, he may well have remembered that the English Franciscans, who at that time went unshod, were expelled from the kingdom of Henry VIII because they objected to his divorce plans.

All these ideas and actions of the most important members of the Barberini family were mirrored, as it were, in the life style and principles of the Augustinian Scalzi who could be seen to adhere to a life that was, so to say, proto-Franciscan. The learned Lucas Holstenius, Cardinal Barberini's librarian, solicited either by the Pope or his nephew, informed them that, though St. Augustine never formulated any clear rules, a study of the relevant sources showed that the unshod tradition had existed in the Augustinian Order right from its beginnings in North Africa.²⁶ Therefore, we may assume the Scalzi could be well assured at least of Urban's tacit approval and, in various instances, of his open support of their way of life, especially when they professed their humility and poverty, and used their naked feet as the expression of it. Their avowed preference for the notion of the Immaculate Conception will have done them no disservice, either, given the Pope's well-

²⁴ *Exemplum epistolae D.N. papae Urbani VIII ad ... Antonium Barberinum* (Cologne 1640). Perhaps, however, the letter had been originally published in Fribourg, 1628 or 1629, to accompany Father Bonito Cambasson's history of the unshod Capuchins.

²⁵ Maffeo Barberini, *Poemata*, 288.

²⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3072, fols. 42^r-55^v.

known devotion to this specific cause. Hence the Pope, having given proper thought to the case, may well have welcomed the visual expression of these virtues as advertised in the images of the Scalzi.

However, neither the decree nor its subsequent revocation were formally registered and properly promulgated. Soon, the vicar-general of the Scalzi pointed out the highly unsatisfactory situation that now ensued, since both parties publicly claimed their right, thereby confusing and scandalizing the faithful. On Sicily, the Conventuals even asked the help of the secular authorities to forcefully introduce the January 1638-decree. The Scalzi now decided to formally petition the cardinal-secretary of State, the same Francesco Barberini.²⁷ They were successful, for he ordered the Congregation of Rites to seek a compromise, which resulted in a papal *breve* of August 7, 1638, imposing a *silentium* on both contestants—which effectively left the Scalzi free to continue to paint their images the way they liked.

However, on August 19, 1641, the recently established French branch of the Scalzi asked the Congregation of the Bishops and the Regular Clergy to validate their new constitutions—which had been accepted by Urban in 1635—as well as allowing them to publicize their saints according to their own wish, apparently irrespective of custom and tradition. When the Congregation decided favourably, Urban issued a brief to confirm it: in his *Divinae maiestatis providentia*, the Pope now formally allowed the Scalzi-paintings and other images, included the printed ones. This, of course, was rather odd, in view of the preceding 1637-decision and its subsequent papal confirmation of January 1638, as well as the final *silentium*. It may be an indication that communication between the various departments of papal government was not optimal and that, as a result, consistency of legislation was not always ensured.

Still, the 1641-brief, immediately contested by the Conventuals, nevertheless was reconfirmed on several occasions by the Congregation of the Bishops and the Regular Clergy, e.g. on March 17, 1645. All ten of France's "Parlements" acknowledged it, too.

In the same period the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand III, and his second wife, the Empress Eleonora, who was an Italian princess, decided to take action. In 1638, Ferdinand had shown his favour to the Scalzi when he accepted their constitutions.²⁸ Now, he wrote to Francesco Barberini, making it abundantly clear that he and his wife

²⁷ Lustrì, *o.c.*, 488.

²⁸ Lustrì, *o.c.*, 284–285.

would not condone any change in the paintings of Scalzi-saints that now adorned the churches and chapels of their realms. The Cardinal talked to his uncle, and the Pope reconfirmed his 1641-brief.²⁹

In 1647, several years after Urban's death, the Conventuals moved to act again, and asked the *Auditor Camerae*, the Judge of the Apostolic Chamber, to effectuate the original decree of December 1637. This was a shrewd move, introducing an influential outsider into the debate, whose judicial powers were such that he might overrule the Congregation of the Bishops. Indeed, the 'Court of the Auditor' was one of the oldest institutions in the Papal States; moreover, its main tasks were in a field central to the functioning of the Papal States and the Curia, the field of finance. It will soon become clear the discussion about the Augustinian images had its economic side as well.

A bit desperate, the Scalzi decided to address the new pope, Innocent X directly, asking him to order the Congregation of Rites to hear them and then effectuate the *silentium* of 1638. Innocent ruled that the auditor, who meanwhile had validated the Conventuals' arguments, should leave the case to the Congregation. Cardinal Franciotti, appointed to advise on the case, soon discovered the strange discrepancies between the 1638- and the 1641-brief, but already the Conventuals had started to try and have the 1637-decree effectuated.

The French and Spanish Scalzi, however, now decided to throw in their lot with their Italian brethren, launching a veritable publicity campaign with the publication of such well-documented tracts and histories as Charles Moreau's *Thesis apologetica pro D. Augustino doctrina, statu, et habitu monachali, regula aliisque ad statum eius pertinentibus* (Paris 1645), his *Vindiciae quadripartita pro D. Augustino* (Antwerp 1650) and the *Sacra eremus augustiniana in qua duobus libris breviter ... de vera institutione ac felici progressu fratrum heremitarum discalceatorum ordinis Sancti Augustini differitur, eosque veros esse Sancti Augustini filios et reformatos demonstratur*, written by Father Maurice de la Mère de Dieu and published in 1658.³⁰ Now, things really got muddled. As the case seemed legally and politically insoluble, Innocent decided to intervene and once again impose a *silentium*. This, apparently, scared the Conventuals for they decided to keep a low profile, probably on account of the widespread and very damaging scandal aroused by the affair.³¹

²⁹ Lustrì, *o.c.*, 488.

³⁰ It was published in Cambery. To be cited as: *Sacra eremus*.

³¹ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 141–154.

Silence of sorts was, indeed, observed till emotions flared up again in the early seventies. Discovering that the document containing the 1648-*silentium* had not been properly registered, in 1674, the Lombardy congregation of the Conventual branch felt bold enough to ask the episcopal court of Cremona to execute both the decree of 1637 and the papal brief of January 1638, in order that some frescoes in the church of St. Ilario, depicting St. Augustine in reformed habit, might be repainted.³² Rome's authority was invoked again, with the Conventuals once more appealing to the auditor, while the Scalzi, in high rage, went to the Congregation of Rites, who decided to overrule their bureaucratic opponent. We should not forget that the officials involved probably were all too eager to secure a case for their own court, as money, prestige and power were at stake.

But then a bureaucratic problem turned up once more. The original January 1638-brief of Pope Urban, in favour of the Conventuals, could not be found in the Secretariat of the Papal Briefs, where it should have been filed. The Conventuals did produce copies, but not having been authenticated by the papal chancellery they could not be accepted as evidence. This considerably damaged the Conventuals' claims. However, after several months both the original brief and, even worse for the Scalzi, an official rescript registering the decree, did turn up. Though the Scalzi accused them of all sorts of legal hanky-panky, the Conventuals obtained a verdict through which the 1637-decree and the subsequent brief of January 1638 were made operative, now.

Overjoyed because their point of view finally prevailed, the Conventuals started having Scalzi images removed.³³ Nevertheless, they soon discovered there was not yet reason for great joy, because this decision only formally ended the 1637-case. The Congregation of Rites continued to examine the Scalzi's 1638-petition that the decree and the brief be officially revoked. Chaos ruled, as nobody knew whether a Europe-wide surge of iconoclasm was now called for, or not.³⁴

As the case dragged on, the reigning Pope, Clement X, died, and, in 1676, a new one, Innocent XI, was elected. Hoping to profit from the new situation, the Reformed Augustinians, now backed by the Spanish ambassador, tried to get the decree formally rescinded, meanwhile backing up their campaign with the help of various tracts extolling the

³² *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 468–476.

³³ A summary of this particular case: *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 553–592.

³⁴ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 4148qq.

virtues of those men who had followed their way of life.³⁵ The new Pope commanded his nephew, the Cardinal-*Padrone* Camillo Altieri to try and reach a compromise between the Order's two branches. As the Conventuals proved unamenable to suggestions, refusing to budge even an inch, Innocent finally decided to side with the Scalzi. With his *motu proprio*, he overruled all previous decisions of the various departments of papal bureaucracy. An 'eternal silence' was imposed that, whatever the validity of the various arguments in the case, left the Scalzi free to pursue their own policy and use their own images to instruct and influence the faithful and establish their power. *Roma locuta, causa finita*—or was it?

We do not really know. The dossier I have reconstructed to form the basis of this chapter only covers the period of the 1590's to the 1680's, with some records going back to the fourteenth century. It does give some glimpses of the later history of the case, viz. the papal reconfirmations of the final decree of Innocent XI. However, it also holds some other documents, pertaining to the 18th century, which seem to indicate that the influence of the image, especially in its supposed and purported exemplary function, was still considered a power and, therefore, a problem.³⁶

The legal foundations of the case against the new image

Right from the beginning, the discussion was drawn into the legal sphere;³⁷ we therefore should discover the Canon Law arguments that were adduced for and against the depiction of bare-footed Augustinian saints.

When the procurator-general of the Conventuals first dragged the case to court in 1615, he produced a variety of objections that well illustrate the complexity of the matter. Summarising his arguments, the essence of his reasoning was that the Scalzi-images were untraditional and therefore new, and that their meaning did not follow sacred history and was, therefore, false; on both accounts, the pertinent rulings of the

³⁵ E.g. Th. a Iesu, *Virorum illustrium arctioris discalceatorum instituti, divi Augustini ordine athletarum exegesis summario* (Prague 1674). Cfr. I. Barbagallo, *Togliti i calzari...la terra che calpesti e santa. La spiritualità degli Agostiniani Scalzi* (Frosinone 1978).

³⁶ Viz. a six-sheet memorandum of the early 18th century preserved in folder 4 of *ASR, AAS*, 129.

³⁷ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 46–48.

Council of Trent were violated, i.e. precisely the rulings that were of vital importance for the development of the visual arts in the Counter-Reformation, Baroque period.

Attempting to purge the Church of abuses, many 16th-century Protestants came near to denying altogether the value, nay even the moral and religious acceptability of any kind of religious art. Images and paintings only resulted in idolatry; excessive decoration as well as festive ritual were manifestations of sinful worldliness.³⁸ In the course of the many years during which the Council sat at Trent, the Roman Catholic Church chose to mount the attack, on the one hand strengthening its traditional doctrine and on the other developing new methods both to combat Protestantism and to bolster up the morale of its own flock. Amongst other things, it became necessary to redefine the function of sacred images by posing that, far from being idolatrous, they were essential as an incitement to piety, a means towards salvation.³⁹

In the 25th and last session of the Council, in December 1563, the decree *De Invocatione et Veneratione Reliquiarum, Sanctorum et Imaginum* was passed which, essentially, decided 'that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other Saints, are to be had and retained, particularly in churches', not because of any divinity or virtue in the objects themselves, but because they refer to prototypes, representing Christ, the Virgin and the saints. It should be noted here that in voicing these ideas, Trent went back all the way to the year 325 AD, to the Council of Nicea, where it had been stated that sacred images were not to be venerated for their own sake, but should serve as a means to instigate the faithful to the virtues shown by the saints; as for the effectiveness of an image, it was appreciated to function as a visual text, much as a verbal one might do.⁴⁰

The bishops, the principal authorities called upon to implement the Tridentine decrees, were admonished to instruct their flock in the stories of the mysteries of Redemption, presenting them in sermons but also in paintings or other appropriate images. As mnemonic devices, the latter would help the faithful to remember these stories, to follow

³⁸ See: U. Köpf, 'Protestantismus und Heiligenverehrung', in: P. Dinzelbacher, D.R. Bauer, eds., *Heiligenverehrung in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Ostfildern 1990), 320–344.

³⁹ For a survey of the controversy on images: G. Scavizzi, *The Controversy on Images. From Calvin to Baronius* (New York 1992).

⁴⁰ Cfr. E. Mâle, *L'art religieux après le Concile de Trente* (Paris 1932).

the salutary examples set before their eyes, to continually revolve in their mind the articles of the Faith and, thus, adore God and cultivate piety.

Having taken this position, the Church of Rome now was to make sure that religious art would not incite idolatry in the Roman Catholics, nor give a weapon to the Protestants. Anything even hinting at heresy, secularism, profanity or indecency had to be avoided at all cost. Therefore, the Council decided that ‘no image shall be set up which is suggestive of false doctrine or which may furnish an occasion of dangerous error in the uneducated’, and later that ‘no one be allowed to place (...) any unusual image in any place or church (...) unless it has been approved by the bishop.’

These in part ‘iconologic’ decrees obviously were the result of the Roman Catholic Church’s policy to retain and even strengthen its power. Indeed, they had no basis in a theory of art in the strict sense, although the issues involved had been discussed already in the 8th and 9th centuries and had been written about by St. Thomas Aquinas as well. Yet, per force they now became the basis of such a theory—or should one say a theology?—of art, viz. a body of ideas and rules that from now on necessarily governed the production of all artists for whom the Church and a profoundly religious laity were the only patrons.

Both during the years of Trent and afterwards, a number of authors, amongst them such Church dignitaries as the saintly Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584), cardinal-archbishop of Milan, and Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597), cardinal-archbishop of Bologna, codified and published the decisions of the council, commenting and elaborating upon them. Thus, a series of treatises came into being, also embodying the new doctrine as applicable to art, beginning with Giovanni Andrea Gilio’s *Dialogo nel quale si ragiona degli errori e degli abusi de’pittori circa l’istorie*, of 1564,⁴¹ and Johannes Molanus’ *De picturis et imaginibus sacris*, published in Louvain in 1570 and, considerably enlarged, again in 1594 as *De historia SS. imaginum et picturarum*, and culminating in the text that bears Paleotti’s name.⁴²

Basing their arguments on the decrees of Trent, the early 17th-century Augustinian Conventuals felt⁴³ they were in a position to insti-

⁴¹ This text has been published in: P. Barocchi, ed., *Trattati d’arte del Cinquecento fra Manierismo e Controriforma*, II (Bari 1961), 1–115.

⁴² G. Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre* (Bologna 1582).

⁴³ E.g. a document ca. 1619: *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 19–21.

gate legal action against the new images introduced in the Scalzi churches, precisely because these could be represented and condemned as being new, that is: not traditional, and false, that is: incorrect within the strict limits imposed by biblical or theological orthodoxy and, on another plane, historical factualness.⁴⁴ However, to provide legal evidence of any of these accusations was not exactly easy because most of these contentions obviously could not be proven within strictly legal confines at all, but touched upon a range of other, wider issues.

The historical reality of the new image

During the 17th century, the discussion generated by the issue of the bare feet of St. Augustine also developed into something of a debate on the possibility and the means to obtain knowledge about the past, viz. the question whether one could with certainty know if St. Augustine had walked barefooted and in sandals, or not. It was inevitable that tradition itself, as embodied in the visual and verbal representations of the Augustinian saints produced over the ages, should be cited as proof of the historical factualness or falsehood of the new image, as its acceptance according to the tenets of Trent depended upon it. This approach, though an important sign of a growing historical consciousness, and yielding a large amount of fascinating data, could not, in the end, conclusively stop the debate, the more so as people must have realized that a methodological or perhaps even epistemological problem was at stake, here.

Mostly, defenders of the new image turned to texts documenting St. Augustine's life to find the proofs they needed.⁴⁵ As the saint, in his own writings, had repeatedly indicated he wished his followers to live like Jesus' disciples, to become part of the Apostolic tradition, one should turn to Holy Scripture for further evidence. Reading such passages as, e.g., Luke: 10,4, Mark: 6,9 or Matthew: 10,10 one would find that the Apostles went barefooted, wore sandals only and eschewed wide robes. Had not John the Baptist said that he was not worthy to untie the laces of Christ's sandals?—a saying that should be taken literally rather than

⁴⁴ E.g. *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 56–58.

⁴⁵ A series of memoranda, all ca. 1638: *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 125–138; 277–297. Most of the arguments used also can be found in: Sacra eremus, *o.c.*, 381–389, as well as in: Eustachio a San Ubaldo, *Quodlibeta regularia* (Milan 1691), 196–226.

metaphorically, as some of the Church Fathers had held. The story of Mary Magdalene's conversion also was felt to show that the Messiah had walked in sandals. Of course, Jesus, in his turn, only followed Old Testamentary practice, another writer added, as the Jewish priests always performed the ritual sacrifices in the Temple barefooted; when King David wanted to show repentance, he, too, unshod his feet.

As for St. Augustine himself,⁴⁶ though it seemed indubitable that he did wear sandals for at least three years of his life, the interpretation of his rule on this very point was not easy. Using his own writings and the many *vitae* written over the ages, one could not, apparently, deduce what exactly constituted his preference. The fact that the saint's life had known three distinct phases and that one had to assume that during each of them his dress was different, complicated matters even more. As a hermit, pondering on and showing repentance of his former debauchery, Augustine wore a cloak of coarse cloth, and sandals. As a coenobite and after being ordained a priest, he might have worn shoes—or not, for as his twenty-second sermon indicates, he certainly did wear them but he also preferred to go barefoot when he felt he had to do penance. As to his footwear and clothing after he had become a bishop, again uncertainty reigned: the possible combinations, viz. of a bishop's pontifical dress with or without shoes, or of a monk's habit with mitre and pluvial all occurred—that is: in the many icons depicting the saint.

From this uncertainty over both the use and the interpretation of sources, the discussion often wandered off to other issues. Authorities like Tertullian and St. John Chrysostomos were cited to prove, respectively, that at least in North Africa, all Christians wore sandals, because, in fact, everyone normally wore them, and that all monks went barefoot in sandals, too, adopting shoes only if necessary for reasons of infirmity; in the 1670's, the Scalzi tried to find evidence that in the year 451 AD, barefooted monks from North Africa, clad in black, had attended the Council of Chalcedon. Citing early hymns used in the Augustinian liturgy, they pointed to texts that clearly referred to the barefootedness of Augustinian saints as well.⁴⁷ Other writers even used ancient Arab sources about the outward appearance of early Christian monks.

⁴⁶ O. Perler, 'Les voyages de Saint Augustin', in: *Recherches Augustiniennes*, I (1958), 5–42, indicates the problems of a non-hagiographical, critical reconstruction of the saint's life.

⁴⁷ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 474.

The Conventuals, ignoring the evidence of their founder's hermit life, stressed the fact that as a coenobite he wore a wide mantle and, perhaps, even shoes. This had become the basis of the Augustinian habit as it was adopted in the Middle Ages, in accordance with the orders of Pope Gregory IX. Thus sanctioned by tradition, any change only would lead to confusion. They also posed the impropriety of a combination of monachal and episcopal dress and therefore concluded to its historical improbability. Finally, they cited Sermon 42, wherein St Augustine declares that those who wish to follow him should be given shoes. Others, however, realized this might be rather too facile an explanation; introducing semantics, they asked whether the Latin word *calceamenta*, interpreted within the context of contemporary North African society as described in, e.g., the writings of St. Bonaventura, should not be understood to mean sandals, with laces that closed around the ankles and calves instead of, anachronistically, as 'modern' shoes.

For the Scalzi, the accumulated evidence as cited above was sufficient to warrant their claim that far from being 'false', their image of Order's founder was historically entirely accurate; as it was also confirmed by the pictorial tradition, the Conventuals' charges that they violated the decrees of Trent should be considered invalid.

Though a new awareness of the past becomes manifest in these discussions about the Augustinian image, in the end the contestants must have realized that the great book of history, even if read with care and acuity, did not offer solutions to contemporary problems; as always, following the line of historical enquiry became futile precisely because, quite anachronistically, it was supposed to produce unambiguous proof for or against the contemporary, 17th-century use of the new image. Other arguments had to be adduced, more influential and powerful than those derived from the realm of scholarship.

The tradition of Augustinian iconography and the new image

Conducting a comprehensive search for all the published specimens of and material on Augustinian art seems a proper way to discover the actual form the image of the Augustinian saints has taken over the centuries, and thus to determine the position of the 'new icons' vis à vis tradition. Although, on the one hand, the body of publications on engravings, frescoes and other paintings with an Augustinian iconog-

raphy is quite impressive, on the other hand one has to bear in mind that it mainly covers the Italian peninsula from the Middle Ages to the 17th century, as well as part of France and the German countries.⁴⁸ Of the significant material known to exist in, for example, the Iberian world, including the American and Asian colonies, or in Flanders and the rest of Catholic Northern Europe, with a few exceptions nothing has been published. It has been noted, however, that unlike in Mediterranean Europe, in those regions the Augustinian iconography shows an interesting proliferation of allegories and miracles, ecstasies and visions. This may suggest that in countries where conversion or re-conversion were the main tasks of the Roman Catholic Church, a different need may have created a different vocabulary and imagery.

It also should be noted that no 20th-century art historian—or other author for that matter—even seems to have touched upon the question which divided the Augustinian order during the 17th century. Looking at the earliest known image of St. Augustine, a late-sixth-century fresco in the library of Pope Gregory the Great in the Lateran Palace which shows the saint as a scholar, clearly barefooted in his sandals, it is amazing to read the description of the painting in a publication devoted to it in 1931, which states that the saint wears shoes, obviously because the author reasons on the basis of an iconographical prejudice which holds that Roman scholars always wore them.⁴⁹

Prior to the 14th century, the thematic range of Augustinian iconography was rather limited—the saint mostly was depicted reading,

⁴⁸ The French scholars Pierre and Jeanne Courcelle have undertaken to collect all available data on Augustinian iconography. This does not mean that they have succeeded in doing so, nor do they provide an adequate analysis. There is no reference to the seventeenth-century iconomachia, either. I have used: P. Courcelle, *Les "Confessions" de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire* (Paris 1963); P. and J. Courcelle, *Vita Sancti Augustini imaginibus adornata* (Paris 1964); Id., 'Nouvelles illustrations des "Confessions" Augustiniennes' in: *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes*, X/4 (1964), 343–351; Id., 'Scènes anciennes de l'iconographie augustiniennne' in: *Recherches Augustiniennes*, IV (1966), 37–47; a sequence was published in: *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes*, X/1, (1964), 51–71; Id., *Iconographie de Saint Augustin. Les Cycles du XIVe siècle* (Paris 1965); Id., *Les Cycles du XVe siècle* (Paris 1969); Id., *Les Cycles du XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris 1972); Id., *Les Cycles du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris 1980).

To study the problem, one must, of course, also use the data collected in: G. Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art. Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence 1952); Id., *Saints in Italian Art. Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting* (Florence 1965); Id., *Saints in Italian Art. Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North East Italy* (Florence 1978); Id., *Saints in Italian Art. Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy* (Florence 1985).

⁴⁹ G. Wilpert, 'Il più antico ritratto di S. Agostino', in: *Miscellanea Augustiniana II*, (Città del Vaticano 1931).

preaching or debating, in the act of receiving a vision, or of giving his rule. With the flourishing of the Augustinian hermits in the 14th century, the iconographical vocabulary was considerably enlarged; scenes from Augustine's life were now depicted as well, partly based on data culled from such well-known and on the whole trustworthy sources as Possidius' *Vita*, and the saint's own *Confessiones*, but increasingly also from the *Legenda Aurea* and the apocryphal sermons *Ad fratres in heremo*.⁵⁰

Surveying the great cycles painted in Italy in the 14th century at Fabriano, Padua and Pavia, and in the 15th century at Cremona, San Gimignano and Lecceto,⁵¹ one has to conclude that, mostly, the saint's feet are not visible at all—although at the hermitage of Lecceto, both shod and unshod representations dating from the 15th century can be found even today.⁵² Often, however, St. Augustine is depicted fully shod, as in Benozzo Gozzoli's 1465 San Gimignano-cycle that follows the 'Confessions'.⁵³ Quite probably, Gozzoli adhered to a regional tradition because in Tuscany—where, ironically and significantly, the saint was the patron of the cobblers' and leather workers' guild—he often is represented as a bishop, with proper shoes. During the 16th and 17th centuries, in West and Northern Europe, series of engravings were published which show no consistent imagery, either: one often finds the Saint represented as a monk, but then he may be entirely barefooted, sandaled or even fully shod.

Whereas the above represents a modern historian's attempt at a survey of Augustinian iconography, it has to be noted that the heat of the discussions in the 17th century generated its own collection of iconographical data, resulting in a quite remarkable series of descriptions of Augustinian images that now are lost but at that time could still be seen in the South European provinces of the Order; this series is the more remarkable as the verbal descriptions often were accompanied by pencil or ink drawings, admittedly rather crude, that, too, have survived in the archival dossiers examined.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ On the discussions about the usefulness of the Golden Legend: Sh.L. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea. A Reexamination of Its Paradoxical History* (London 1985), esp. 11–70.

⁵¹ E.g. a series of documents, dated ca. 1619: *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 81–98, 101–124.

⁵² A recent documentation is: C. Alessi, a.o. eds., *Lecceto e gli eremi agostiniani in terra di Siena* (Siena 1990), 190–191; 222–223.

⁵³ Kaftal, *o.c.*, 1952, 101–114; cfr. M. Castelli, *Storie di Santi nella Pittura di Firenze* (Florence 1986), 60.

⁵⁴ All these data are gathered in folder nr. 3 of: *ASR, AAS*, 129.

This quest for iconographical proof of the Scalzi's point of view was started in 1618, when all over Catholic Europe the Scalzi supporters were asked to send in descriptions of the images of Augustinian saints locally revered, preferably accompanied by a drawing. Material continued to accumulate until the 1670's.

A number of early instances where Christ and the Apostles are represented barefooted are cited—such as the images at the top of the *Scala sancta* near St. John Lateran, or the mosaics depicting Christ, Mary and the disciples in the tribuna of Sta Maria Maggiore. Father Agostino Maria, who had first adopted the conical hat when he saw the old painting in his friend's Vatican office, also reasoned that it had to be a very traditional item because even nowadays the poor of North Africa wore such caps.⁵⁵ Of course, important proof was provided by the very old alabaster shrine in Pavia that dated from the year 722 AD and contained Augustine's relics: the sculpture shows the saint with the typical Scalzi headdress. The authenticity of this image now was corroborated by the bishop of Pavia, who wrote about it to Rome.⁵⁶ With equal relish, the very old St. John Lateran fresco is mentioned, where the saint wears sandals only.⁵⁷ Generally speaking, however, unless other evidence was available, no real effort was made to improve the quality of the proof by ordering the visual material according to its chronology. Yet, some informants did stress the venerable age of the objects they brought to Rome's attention, sometimes even asking an expert on ancient paintings to declare that the position and technique of certain frescoes indicated they were 'at least two hundred years old'.

From Spain, the cycle of paintings in the *Descalzados*-monastery of the Escorial was cited. In France, frescoes in the chapel of St. Anne in the church of St. Augustine at Toulouse show the saint as a bishop, but with sandals; they even show St. Jerome as a cardinal, once again with sandals—as in Rome itself, the Counter-Reformation saint par excellence, St. Charles Borromeo, in his church of San Carlo ai Catinari, is to be seen in his cardinal's robes, and yet barefooted. Indeed, the iconography of San Carlo often tended to stress this aspect of humility by having an acolyte lifting up the hem of his master's robe, for all the world to see he was 'nudipedic'.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Lustrì, *o.c.*, 5.

⁵⁶ *ASR, AAS*, 129, a notarial document dated 16 April 1624.

⁵⁷ *ASR, AAS*, 129, a notarial document dated 31 August 1619.

⁵⁸ I would like to thank Dr. Louise Rice, who kindly drew my attention to this phenomenon.

All over Italy, of course, examples abounded. Most frequently cited was the cloister of the Milanese convent of St. Mark that had a cycle of Augustinian saints depicted as Scalzi. Another impressive series was the one already mentioned in the church of St. John of the Augustinian monastery at Carbonara, near Naples—a series since destroyed. A number of witnesses produced written proof of the extensive number of 23 Augustinian hermits depicted there in 1433, several of who were Scalzi in every aspect.⁵⁹ A number of pious people referring to themselves as ‘impartial witnesses’ described the great fresco-cycle in the Tuscan monastery of Lecceto as proof of the Scalzi-view as well.

A great many other examples were given, from all over Italy, not only of St. Augustine but also of Monica, Alypius and other contemporaries and followers of the patron saint, all in reformed habit, as well as of such later Augustinian saints as St. William of Aquitaine and St. Nicholas of Tolentino. Quite often, public notaries vouched for the exactness of the verbal descriptions or at least confirmed the fact that witnesses had come on their own account to deposit their testimonies. Although the background of the persons who testify on the Scalzi’s behalf is not always mentioned, one often—as at Fermo—gets a glimpse of considerable groups of well-to-do citizens expressing their honest concern over the future of their favourite devotion, the fulcrum of their religious and civic life.

Of course, Augustinian iconography was not only characterized by the persons of its saints. Besides the items of their outward apparel, an artist, referring to the biographies of the saints, could use a great many attributes to enhance the image’s meaning.⁶⁰ For the patron saint himself, some twelve elements formed the standard repertoire—among them a chalice, a heart, a dove, a shell, but also a child, a crowd, et cetera. In Rome, even twenty-two different attributes were accepted as part of the Augustinian iconographical canon. St. Monica had her own symbols, amongst which the name of Jesus, tears, and of course, the famous wimple and cincture, and so did the other saints.

Yet, it has to be doubted whether the public at large, looking at the Augustinian images, always was able to ‘read’ these in the way

⁵⁹ *ASR, AAS*, 129, notarial documents dated 1638.

⁶⁰ E.g.: A. Frigerio, *Vita Gloriosissima e miracoli excelsi del beato confessore Nicola da Tolentino* (Milan 1603); L. Torelli, *Ristretto delle Vite degli Uomini e delle Donne Illustri in Santità (...) dell’Ordine Agostiniano* (Bologna 1647), et cetera.

intended. Surely, the finer points of the messages mediated by these attributes must have escaped many, as it called for a considerable knowledge of theology, Church history and of the mostly apocryphal episodes from the lives of the Augustinian saints that often formed the subject matter of the images. The fact that each of the various attributes had several different symbolic values, not only makes a complete understanding on the viewers' part less than likely, but also should warn us not to indulge in iconological over-speculation. Consequently, one may assume that the people involved in this iconomachia were very much aware of the fact that the general public might well be more easily influenced by such unequivocal characteristics as bare or shod feet, or a simple garb that proclaimed poverty and humility.

Therefore, I was surprised to note that two of the most obvious cases that might have been adduced to strengthen the Scalzi's point of view were not cited even once: the bare feet in Caravaggio's *Madonna di Loreto*—admittedly, not the feet of a saint, but of a pilgrim—and the bare feet of another pilgrim, in a painting by Lanfranco, where the pilgrim reveals himself to be Christ, and where the person washing his feet is Saint Augustine himself, both paintings, moreover, exposed in what might be termed the enemy's fort, viz. in the main church of the Conventual Augustinians!

The new image: symbol, meaning and function

An important point has to be discussed now, the more so as historiography has entirely ignored it hitherto: the question of the relation between form and function in these various examples of Augustinian iconography. Many of the cycles mentioned above adorned the walls of cloisters in Augustinian monasteries; they obviously functioned within the Order only, mediating and internalizing values within the body of the Augustinians themselves. Others decorated more public spaces, such as chapels and churches where the image provided insight to the faithful, sometimes even, like the great cycle of San Gimignano, functioning as a 'poor man's bible' or as his introduction to theology, Church history and tradition.

From the beginning of the dispute there were those who insisted that no great importance should be attached to the historical factualness of the new iconography. One of the most vociferous ideologues of the Scalzi, Fra Basilio della Santissima Trinità, wrote a learned treatise

arguing that through the ages saints had been depicted not according to any reality and, consequently, historically accurate, but in such a way that symbolic *significatio* would be realized; this aimed at the presentation of the ideals and virtues which these saints stood for.⁶¹ Of course, God was not a dove, angels did not have wings, Mary's breast was not really pierced by seven arrows, the keys of St. Peter were not real keys meant to open real doors, and so on. When the saints in Paradise were shown as ideally beautiful people, or when demons in Hell, who had no body at all, were depicted as malformed creatures or hideous beasts, it was only to convey their state of mind—blissful happiness or utter depravity.

Actually, Fra Basilio poses, all these things do not represent nature and reality but carry a deeper meaning. Thus, nudity, whether of the feet only or the entire body, is meant to show such virtues as humility and repentance, or chastity, simplicity and sanctity. In the image, it is the meaning that counts, not the form, it is the intention and the action that it should instigate that are important, not the material representation.⁶²

While not all who wrote in defence of the Scalzi showed this amount of perspicacity, which to some traditionalists may have sounded very much like free thinking, most did grasp the difference between form, symbol and meaning. Following Fra Basilio, many felt that the virtues of humility, poverty and asceticism as symbolized in the images of the Augustinian saints primarily intended to create a maximum of edification and emulation among the believers, to lead them towards the mysteries of the Faith.⁶³ However, to be really effective, the example as formalized and symbolized in the image first had to be realized by those who professed the rule propagated by the images' subjects, the Augustinian saints.

Thus, all through the 17th century, the discussion about the acceptability of the barefooted image had a bearing upon the actual lifestyle of the Scalzi, as well as upon the way their actions and behaviour were meant to impress the society they lived in and sought to influ-

⁶¹ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 277–285.

⁶² *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 286–291, a letter by Fra Cipriano a Santa Maria Maggiore, January 16, 1619.

⁶³ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 343sqq., a note by Pietro Angelo Antolini.

ence. From the decisions of the general chapters of 1612 and 1638, it appears that the Scalzi were aware of the fact that the discipline of their group could and should also depend upon small things. Hence the simple rules about barefootedness, the wearing of sandals, the width of the tonsure—between two and two-and-a-half fingers—, the cut of the habit all were seen to affect the behaviour of the members of the Order; the way they visualized the discipline inherent in the Augustinian Rule and, therefore, the example they set to themselves and to the wider community.

This was particularly important as the Augustinians attached great weight to their educational activities. Whether or not the many pupils who flocked to their houses chose to enter the Order and, perhaps, the priesthood, they were bound to be deeply influenced by the teaching they received and the example that was given to them. Without education, society would not function properly; without discipline, education could not fulfil its task. Discipline would only be effective if all involved, but, primarily, the teachers and everyone living in a given Augustinian convent, adhered to it, by showing it in their private as well as in their public behaviour. Therefore, an exemplary way of life, manifest in such details as the bare feet, should be a criterion in the selection of the Order's novice masters and teachers.

A number of decrees of Clement VIII, Urban VIII, Innocent X, Alexander VII and, finally, of Innocent XII, in 1695, all emphasized the importance of discipline—up to such points as the proper pose, bearing and gesticulation during services—for the mind and mentality of the Order's members, and for the impact of their example on others. Thus, a steadily growing body of rules was created, governing all aspects of the relation between senior and junior monks, and between the monks as a group and the novices, forbidding, e.g., such things as a visit from a student to the cell of his professor: if necessary at all, the pupil should remain in the corridor and address his teacher from outside, while the cell door remained open. The discipline of which these rules were the outcome and which was stipulated in these decrees, was to be symbolized in the images of the Order's saints: the virtues of asceticism, poverty and humility would immediately appear from their bare feet.

From the late 14th century onwards, the Augustinians used a variety of means to spread the cult of their saints and, more specifically, of their founder, employing all instruments of propaganda then available. St. Augustine became the patron of a great many new churches,

and elaborate ceremonies were staged in his honour.⁶⁴ The saint even took the place of the Virgin in the sacred music sung by the companies of *laudesi*, the lay-singers attached to Augustinian foundations.⁶⁵ When printing became an ever more important vehicle of communication and socio-cultural persuasion, the great scholarly industry that had grown up around Augustine's works culminated in their codification by Fra Bartholomew of Urbino who compiled the *Milleloquium Sancti Augustini*, that went through a great many impressions.⁶⁶ In the 16th century, the Rule, the Sermons and the Confessions, translated into the vernacular, reached the public in a number of editions, often profusely illustrated for effective use among wide strata of society.⁶⁷ *Vitae* of Sts. Augustine, Monica and Nicholas of Tolentino were published, lavishly embroidered with legends and stories of spectacular miracles. Yet, such printed texts only would influence the smaller part of the believers, most of whom remained illiterate until well into the 19th century. Still, there existed a fruitful interaction between the printed and the parallel oral tradition. For of course, all this material also was used in the sermons that were preached in the Augustinian churches, sermons that, in their turn, often appeared in print as well. Though it seems highly likely that the monks delivering these sermons would, in both word and gesture, refer to the pictorial cycles adorning the walls of the Order's churches, to ensure that the verbal and the visual text would complement one another, as the Nicean fathers had stipulated already, I have not come across any eye-witness accounts of such occasions. In the end, the actual influence or power of the image on the mentality of a past society must escape historical reconstruction.

Obviously, there were those who posed the question 'whether the habit makes the monk', asking themselves and their superiors if emphasis should not rather fall on an endeavour to put into action the essence of the virtues that were being preached and pictorially presented. They stated it was futile, nay even a shame to spend so much emotion dis-

⁶⁴ D. Esteban, 'De festis et ritibus sacris Ordinis Eremitarum S.P. Augustini', in: *Analecta Augustiniana*, 16 (1937/38), pp. 6–11.

⁶⁵ R. Arbesmann, 'A Pioneering Work in Augustinian Iconography', in: *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 4 (1966), 27–36.

⁶⁶ R. Arbesmann, 'Der Augustiner Eremitenorden und der Beginn der humanistische Bewegung', in: *Cassiacum*, XIX (1965), 36–54.

⁶⁷ P. Cherubelli, *Le edizioni volgari delle opere di S. Agostino nella Rinascità* (Florence 1940).

curring the formalities of what were, after all, externals only, the more so as it profoundly scandalized the general public.⁶⁸ However, the consensus among the Reformed Augustinians seems to have been that they had to live up to their icons, to make the image, so to say, incarnate. They had to function as living examples, alongside the saints whose images visualized the qualities and values they sought to impose upon society: humility, sobriety, poverty even, a return to the ideals of the early Christian Church as advocated by Trent.

The fact that this specific war of ideas was largely waged within the Augustinian Order should not blind us to another fact, viz. that it was part of the wider debate surrounding the post-Tridentine missionary movement that reactivated Christianity both in Europe and in the overseas colonies that were of a Roman Catholic persuasion.

Indeed, missionary strategies were discussed widely. Was it enough to convert the heathen through the sacred, magic act of baptism, as the first missionaries had done in their campaign to christianize Europe's peripheries in the early centuries of the Christian era, and as they still did in the colonies? Or should conversion be effectuated at a deeper level, after the tenets of the Faith had been properly taught, and, moreover, the morals that would ensure a Christian way of life had been interiorised as well? Which means would best serve these complex ends, especially among the illiterate, the *idioti*, both overseas and in Europe? Should one use the word, only, which reached man's intellect, or also the image, that reached his heart, through his imagination? The Franciscans who, in the 1520's, had first crossed the Atlantic to begin their missionary work among the native Mexicans made use of engraved pictures to drive home their message, both in churches and in schools. One of them, the Mexican missionary Diego Valades, in 1579 published a book based on his experiences in the Indies, his *Rhetorica christiana ad concinandi, et orandi usum accomodata*, in Perugia. It became widely famous as a handbook to be used in all kind of situations wherein conversion was at stake and the power of words, sounds and images could be exploited. For whereas the word, especially the written word, appealed to reason, the life of the intellect, the image—as well as music—unleashed fantasy, and, hence, was the perfect means to

⁶⁸ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 444–445, a letter from Vittorio Agostino Ripa, November 29, 1674.

influence the life of the senses which, especially among those who had little or no education, was the only basis whereon to build some kind of religious understanding.

From the end of the 16th century onwards, the Jesuits, quickly becoming the Order specialising in missionary work both within and without Europe, recognized the image as the perfect language to convince and convert the illiterate. Indeed, Saint Ignatius deemed pictures the prime vehicles to show both the *res corporea* and the *res incorporea*. But so did the policy-makers of other Orders, engaged either in the re-conversion of Protestants to the true faith of the Mother Church—not surprisingly, Molanus's above-mentioned fundamental tract about the use of sacred images did appear precisely after the fierce wave of iconoclasm that hit Flanders in the 1560's—, or in the equally arduous task of keeping their own flock from going astray. And so, it seems, did the Augustinians themselves, what with one branch of the Order vilifying and seeking to disempower the other, with all consequences doctrinal and financial. The need to employ every means available was all the greater because by now the Church, and more specifically that part of the clergy who made the teaching of the poor their special task, had become fully aware of the fact that, especially in the remoter parts of the countryside, Christianity was only a varnish, barely covering a world of beliefs that to Rome were utterly pagan.

Yet a discussion continued, viz. whether the image was a source of pleasure, of delectation, only, or if it was an autonomous vehicle that would lead to wisdom, and to the Faith. Moreover, some held that the rhetorical, theatrical strategies involved in pictorial representation were means to an end, only, to be used prudently and sparingly. Others held a different opinion. In the *Dottrina christiana* of Gianlorenzo Romano, S.J., the essentials of the Faith basically were represented in simple but yet speaking images, captioned by a few words, only.

Consequently, in the first decades of the 17th century, a broad spectrum of strategies evolved. It resulted in learned discussions about the meaning of arcane words and images, exemplified in the neo-Platonic cult of the stars and in the search for the hieroglyphs—essentially an elite phenomenon; it also resulted in the production of simple images and the use of bold rhetorical stratagems for the edification and education of the masses. Yet, both esoteric speculation and such phenomena as the 'poor man's engravings' and the 'little saints' were closely scrutinized by the Inquisition which feared that the cause of orthodoxy might be at stake, here.

The economic and financial significance of the new image

The first indication that a struggle for economic and financial power was a major, though hidden motive behind the Conventuals' initial action and the reaction of the Scalzi can be found in the procurator-general's court plea of 1615.⁶⁹ In it, he mentions the fact that the Scalzi had instituted several 'Companies of the Cincture of St. Monica' that created an institutional and social context for a new devotion around the Augustinian saints, with sermons, blessings and a monthly procession. According to the procurator, Clement VIII had authorized the foundation of only one such confraternity—we may, of course, assume that there was a sorority as well—which made the other ones a fraud, a means to deceive the people. The Conventuals also spread a rumour that the relics of St. Monica, around which this new devotion centred, were false.

The Scalzi professed themselves shocked by the latter part of this accusation. To defend themselves, they invoked the privileges accorded to the Augustinian Order, theirs to enjoy as much as by the Conventuals. Actually, a papal faculty of October 12, 1613 spoke of *sodalitates*, of confraternities, without posing any limit to their number.⁷⁰ In the course of the 17th century, the membership of these 'Fraternities of the Cincture' brought with it a gigantic mass of indulgences. Indeed, when asked by the Spanish ambassador what indulgences to choose, Pope Clement X himself is reported to have said: 'Take the Cincture of St. Augustine, for it carries with it everything'.⁷¹

Of course, what we should realize is that these devotions, organized in such a way, did generate quite a bit of money from alms and other gifts. This could be used to take care of the cost of a number of regular tasks of the Augustinian churches, such as, perhaps, certain festivities and everything connected with them;⁷² these, in their turn, served to attract a good many people who, with their gifts, enriched the Order

⁶⁹ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 2–3.

⁷⁰ *Bullae Summum Pontificum ... ad Augustinienses exalceatos spectantia* (Rome 1742), 14.

⁷¹ According to: F.M. Capriola, *San Agostino e i suoi eremiti, specialmente di San Giovanni a Carbonara in Napoli* (Sienna 1887), 108–119.

⁷² This, of course, was normal practice all over Christendom; cfr.: P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Koloniale Caritas en Curiale Bureaucratie. De Broederschap van het Allerheiligst Sacrament in de kathedraal van Mexico, 1538–1688', in: *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 98 (1985), 1–23.

even more. Urban's decision of 1636 to allow the Scalzi to carry their own cross in processions, undoubtedly must have brought financial benefits as well.

As the struggle continued and the pressure of the Conventuals increased, the fact that other motives than devotional and religious ones were involved, emerged ever more clearly, although, of course, none of this was ever explicitly stated. The Scalzi indicated that their reformed way of life, as symbolized in the new image, should be adopted by the entire Order, as the Conventuals spent a lot of money on their wide, rather luxurious habits, their shoes, et cetera; would not that serve to clothe a great number of poor religious persons? They also fulminated against the threat uttered by the Conventuals to use, if necessary, the entire capital of the Order to destroy the new icons.

In the critical year 1637, the Scalzi of Sicily furiously reacted against the chaos, citing groups of monks belonging to other Orders who now donned their particular habit to easily collect a great amount of alms—incidentally an obvious indication of the Scalzi's popularity, religious as well as financial. And when, also in 1637, the Conventuals sought the suppression of one Scalzi-image—the much-maligned engraving of St. Nicholas of Tolentino—we should be aware that the ban would, of course, extend to the printing of all sorts of illustrated pious tracts or other devotionalia,⁷³ no mean source of income for either contestant. For already from 1629 onwards, printed pictures of Augustinian saints in Scalzi-habit had circulated widely, as, e.g., in Naples and Prague.⁷⁴ No wonder Urban's 1641-brief, allowing the French Scalzi to paint and print their images as they liked, was such an important event. Also, it created a new industry and new income.

Another papal brief of the same year, which allowed the Scalzi to have the bodies of those who wished to be buried in their churches brought thereto immediately,⁷⁵ instead of having them carried to the parish church first, must have cost many a parish priest a good part of his earnings, while, on the other hand, considerably strengthening the Scalzi's financial position.

During the crisis of 1674, the Scalzi adduced they would experience a significant loss of vocations if, due to an adverse papal decision,

⁷³ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 349.

⁷⁴ *Lustri, o.c.*, 245.

⁷⁵ *Lustri, o.c.*, 331.

their reformed way of life would have to be abolished. As, by then, in Italy alone some 69 monasteries were involved, the magnitude of the problem in all its aspects becomes quite clear.

Again, in 1676, the Scalzi indicate what repercussions large-scale iconoclasm would have. In the lands of the Habsburgs, Spain and the Empire, as well as in France, where, according to them, the barefooted version was commonly accepted, repainting the images would result in a huge scandal, an outcry amongst the faithful who had underlined their devotion and their vows with material gifts as well.⁷⁶ When the Congregation of Rites finally published its decree against the Scalzi-images, one of the ways the monks voiced their dismay was to cite their poverty. Since their churches had been richly decorated by devout and powerful patrons, any changes would not only enrage these influential protectors, but also result in huge costs which the Augustinian houses could not possibly bear.⁷⁷ In their subsequent appeal to the pope, the Scalzi openly admitted that a forced reform of their way of life, their devotions and their images would ruin them, as it would almost certainly reduce to nil the income from alms upon which they largely depended. After Pope Clement X had decided not to endorse the Congregation's decree, the Scalzi, emboldened and, obviously trying to cash in on their victory, asked his successor for a brief that would establish the amount of indulgences the confraternities and sororities of Monica's girdle were allowed to grant—without mentioning that this, of course, was another important source of income.

Power politics and the new image

It is strange that up till now scarcely anybody has noticed that the very fact of the existence of the *Agostiniani Scalzi* and, indeed, of the Battle of the Bare Feet, can be explained from the change of mentality brought about by the Catholic Reform movement of which, e.g., the Jesuit Order was a child as well. As has been shown above, even before the two Roman monasteries decided to adopt a new way of life that, to them, seemed more in keeping with the original ideas and life-style

⁷⁶ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 138–139.

⁷⁷ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 494, 497–500.

of St. Augustine and his followers, in the 1580's a group among the Spanish Augustinians had given the example, which in the next decade was followed in Rome.⁷⁸

Even more remarkable than this omission in the Augustinian and general historiography is the fact that the Reformed Augustinians do not seem to have played a role in the complicated tangle of Italian politics where such states as, for example, the Republic of Venice, were all too eager to take up any novelty if they thought it might irritate the papacy. Only at the end of the struggle do we get a clearer idea of the Italian partisans of the Scalzi.

In December 1674, an impressive number of bishops and cardinals, as well as members of the nobility, wrote in support of the Scalzi. Among them were several highborn ladies.⁷⁹ Incidentally, it seems that, quite often, the reformed branches of religious Orders enjoyed aristocratic female support, perhaps because the increasing lack of opportunities and an inevitably heightened sense of the artificiality of their existence led women of this class to a vision of a life of simplicity and devotion to a higher cause, or, conversely, the rise of a new devotion gave them a much-wished for chance to establish their own networks of patronage, and hence, power.

However, in the other Roman Catholic countries the Augustinian iconomachia did generate considerable political attention. One may assume this was precisely because most Catholic princes eagerly grasped each new occasion to strengthen their own position within the Roman Catholic Church of their state through the support of initiatives and groups that might bolster up the confidence of the faithful. In doing so, they also hoped to combat the possibly disrupting forces of heresy in their own country. Equally important, however, must have been their wish to counterbalance the efforts of Rome to increase its authority, a policy that made itself felt in the first decades of the 17th century.

In Spain, where the entire Catholic Reform movement was strongly supported by the royal family, the wife of Philip III had founded a monastery of *Agostinianos Descalzados* in the Escorial palace; as mentioned above, its cloister was adorned with representations of barefoot Augustinian saints.⁸⁰ Generally speaking, the Scalzi in Spain wielded

⁷⁸ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 35, a document ca. 1619.

⁷⁹ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 444, sqq.

⁸⁰ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 67, a document ca. 1619.

great influence. The very fact that they were among the first to come to the help of their Roman brethren obviously relates to their wish to keep that power by forging coalitions all over Christendom.

In France, the reformation among the Augustinians was very successful, too. It had started already around 1600, when many French Augustinians adopted the Scalzi way of life. Pope Paul V, I feel, must have seen interesting possibilities to use their renewed fervour for the re-conversion of this realm, whose fidelity to Rome had been endangered greatly by the rise of the Huguenots. From then on, the Scalzi received every possible royal support—after all, Queen Anne, the wife of Louis XIII, was a Spanish-Habsburg princess. In the 1620's, she made the Scalzi Father Francois Amet de St. Jérôme her confessor, while her husband, to celebrate the victory over the Huguenots, founded the great Scalzi monastery of Nôtre Dame de Victoire.⁸¹ In 1628, the French branch of the Scalzi became virtually independent of Rome, with its own constitutions, recognised by Pope Urban in 1635.

In 1637, when the Italian Scalzi got into trouble again, the French threw in their weight, asking the Congregation of Rites to be accepted as a party on account of the fact that their principal interests were at stake as well. It seems quite likely that royal backing enabled the French reformed Augustinians to ask Urban VIII to concede to them the very privileges the Italians were now defending. When the Pope, apparently unconscious of the contradiction, did issue his 1641-*breve*, this greatly complicated matters for the rest of the century, although the Scalzi never lost an opportunity to point out and exploit this discrepancy.

In 1641, the French Scalzi went on to establish a mission in North Africa, significantly near Hippo, their founder's birthplace;⁸² soon named "Le bastion de France", this house obviously served the French commercial and political interests in the area—already, there were those in France who contemplated conquering this economically and militarily vital region; at the same time the foundation cannot have been displeasing to Rome, either, what with Pope Urban and Cardinal Francesco being fervent advocates of the spreading of the Faith in foreign parts, especially around the Mediterranean.⁸³

⁸¹ *Sacra eremus, o.c.*, 173sqq., 2140220.

⁸² On its foundation: *Sacra eremus, o.c.*, 229–238.

⁸³ Cfr. P.J. Rietbergen, 'The Making of a 'Syncretic Saint'? Cultural Integration in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Early Seventeenth Century', in: *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome*, LVII (1998), 209–228.

Meanwhile, in 1623, two Reformed Augustinians from Italy had crossed the Alps to settle in Prague. Soon, Emperor Ferdinand II realised their missionary potential in a kingdom that still shook from disruptive religious wars.⁸⁴ A few years later, the Scalzi moved to Vienna. There, they were put in possession of the once-famous Augustinian convent attached to the imperial Hofburg, which lately had fallen into disrespect.⁸⁵ In a very short time, the Scalzi made a success of themselves, turning the church of the monastery into a centre of imperial religious pageantry, especially after the building, in it, of a copy of the Shrine of the Virgin of Loreto, erected by Ferdinand after his victory over the Bohemians. In short, in Vienna, too, the Reformed Augustinians enjoyed the favour of the emperors, as well as, it should be added, of the emperors' favourites. From 1639 onwards, the two Eckembergh princes, uncle and nephew—who, in the 1630's, has been sent to Rome to represent their masters, Ferdinand II and Ferdinand III, respectively, before Pope Urban—erected a Scalzi-monastery in Ljubljana.⁸⁶

In view of the imperial favour it was inevitable that a crisis started building up when the Congregation of Rites began to issue orders against the Scalzi, which were sent to France, the German countries and Spain. The fact that in various towns of the Habsburg states the Conventuals actually started to repaint all images showing traces of Scalzi-influence, considerably exacerbated public opinion. We may safely assume that, if for no other reason than the possibility of public disorder, the secular authorities were not pleased at all.

Rome now felt the anger of Emperor Ferdinand III who from 1638 onwards intimated he would not countenance the scandal that might result from a suppression of the Scalzi-images. Rome also was confronted with the interference of the Empress Eleonora. In 1648, she commanded the imperial ambassador at the Curia, Prince Savelli, to inform Pope Innocent X of the displeasure she and Her House would feel if the Scalzi-icons would be abolished;⁸⁷ indeed, that was the main reason why Innocent then asked the Congregation of Rites to stop pro-

⁸⁴ Lustrì, *o.c.*, 205–211.

⁸⁵ F. Rennhofer, *Die Augustiner-Eremiten in Wien: ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte Wiens* (Würzburg 1956), 175sqq., as well as: J.J. Gavignan, 'Die Uebergabe des Wiener Augustinerklosters an die Barfüsser, 1630. Ein aspekt der Gegenreformation in Wien', in: *Festschrift Franz Loidl*, Vol. II (Vienna 1970), 132–154.

⁸⁶ Lustrì, *o.c.*, 334–335.

⁸⁷ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 424, sqq.

ceedings against the Scalzi, announcing the situation only could be resolved through the imposition of a *silentium*.⁸⁸

In the 1670's, the emperor himself, now Leopold I, asked several members of the imperial party in the College of Cardinals, such as Cardinals Altieri, Facchinetti and Pio, to intervene on behalf of the Scalzi, indicating that on no account would he tolerate that in his widespread states their images be broken or repainted. Cardinal Pio, in his turn, advised the Scalzi to ask their German colleagues to petition to the emperor as well, as he might then use this as a pretext to interrogate the papal nuncio on this point—who, of course, then could not help but alarm the Curia to the imperial displeasure. The Spanish ambassador to the Holy See, the Count of Melgar, also addressed the pope on the Scalzi's behalf.⁸⁹

Emboldened by this support, the Scalzi then planned to petition Pope Clement X for their branch of the Augustinian Order to be made entirely independent of the Conventuals, citing other examples of such a construction in the Capuchin and Carmelite branches of the Franciscan Order. The present vicar-general could *de iure* assume the title and, more important, the functions of a father-general which, *de facto*, he exercised already. The general chapter of the Italian Scalzi even might extend its suzerainty over the Reformed Augustinians in France, Portugal and Spain—after some mutual deliberations, of course.⁹⁰ Apart from the fact that the Italian branch obviously was seeking to increase its own status and power—quite probably unbeknownst to the other Congregations—we once again find the Scalzi using their friends in high places: the petition to the pope was to be seconded not only by the emperor but also by other 'absolute princes' involved.

Last, but not least, one should realize that for the popes, too, power was at stake, though, of course, this was never mentioned. First of all, it should be noted that the various decrees of a *silentium* imposed by successive popes apparently were not really effective, given the fact that, each time, the discussion did flare up again, lasting well nigh a century. It is an unambiguous indication of the limits of papal power. Obviously, the seemingly strict rules established for religious art by the Council of Trent did not prevent such fierce disputes, nor were they instrumental in providing a solution for them. Moreover, we must assume that the

⁸⁸ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 539–540.

⁸⁹ *ASR, AAS*, 129, pp. 490–491.

⁹⁰ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 617sqq.

Roman pontiffs, whatever their private opinions, were not at all happy with the Augustinian icon battle, as it provided fresh arguments to the Protestants, fuelling their age-old criticism against the phenomenon of icon 'worship'. Indeed, in their pleas the Scalzi themselves, quite cleverly and quite openly, exploited Rome's fear on this point.⁹¹ Of course, this fear was not abating: in the 17th century, the popes felt part of their erstwhile power slip from their hands, due not only to the growing authority claimed by the European kings and princes but also to the disastrous results of the Peace of Westphalia for the religious authority of Rome in the Holy Roman Empire: the existence of Protestant states was now openly acknowledged.⁹² Hence, they could well do without the counterproductive propaganda the battle of the images caused.

On another plane of power politics, one should interpret the vacillating attitudes of Urban VIII and Innocent X. The Barberini-pope, I think, must have been influenced in his decision to impose the 1638-*silentium* by the stern words of Emperor Ferdinand; three years later, he may well have given in to the French Scalzi both because he basically admired the Scalzi's vision, and, indeed, had given them a great many privileges, and because he could not very well afford to antagonize the French king whose military and political support he needed to keep whatever power he still had in the German states.⁹³

As indicated above, the Pamfilij-pope imposed the 1648-*silentium* quite obviously because he could not ignore the House of Habsburg's wishes, for the very same reasons.

Finally, Innocent XI settled the case for what I believe to have been political considerations as well. When he ascended the papal throne, someone who according to most historians scrupulously upheld moral standards attained the highest office in the Roman Catholic Church.⁹⁴ His actions, in his capital, his states and his Church, were those of a man who planned to reform his subjects' life both in its religious

⁹¹ *ASR, AAS*, 129, p. 24, a document ca. 1619.

⁹² Cfr. Rietbergen, *Pausen*, o.c., 359–369.

⁹³ Cfr. for the general background to Urban's policy: G. Lutz, 'Rom und Europa während des Pontifikats Urbans VIII', in: R. Elze (ed.), *Rom in der Neuzeit* (Vienna-Rome 1970), 74–121.

⁹⁴ Cfr. for a general sketch of Innocent's ideas: B. Neveu, 'Episcopus et Princeps Urbis: Innocent XI réformateur de Rome d'après des documents inédits (1676–1689)', in: E. Gatz, (ed.), *Römische Kurie, Kirchliche Finanzen, Vatikanisches Archiv. Studien zu Ehren von Hermann Hoberg*, Vol. II, (Rome 1979), 597–634.

and its profane aspects. This undoubtedly explains why the Reformed Augustinians, who professed a sober way of life and used the images of their saints to influence the public in this direction, found a willing ear when they asked for his support. The decree of eternal silence which the Scalzi obtained not only left them free to pursue their ideas and ideals, it also was consistent with Innocent's own policy and supported his authority, thus increasing his power.

Surveying the episode in retrospect, it seems that whatever the final verdicts in the various cases brought against the Scalzi during the 17th century, the successive popes mostly let their judgement be guided by considerations of religious politics and power, rather than by Canonical-legal or, for that matter, aesthetic arguments.

Conclusion

Indubitably, the two branches of the Augustinian Order who, in the 17th century, got into conflict over the way their saints should be represented already knew the truth of what, some three centuries later, Wittgenstein said when he formulated his famous dictum that who masters language is master of all. The Augustinians were vividly aware of the fact that images were visual language, and, therefore, instruments of power. They also knew this power as it was understood by later scholars: as a force directing desire, educating feeling, producing knowledge within both individual and society, and thus inducing cooperation in a culture—cooperation to a certain set of ideas and values, to certain actions connected therewith.⁹⁵

An extraordinarily lucky find of documents has allowed me to reveal the multifarious ways in which, during the Baroque period, the image's influence was real, at least in Roman, and Roman Catholic society. Inevitably, this chapter has become an essay in integral history, as power always exists on many planes, reaches into different fields of human emotion and action. I have analysed and interpreted power from different perspectives. As an effort in integral history, this chapter has tried to ask as many relevant questions as seemed possible about the historical object and its context, and to use and interpret all the

⁹⁵ M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York 1972), esp. 57–59, as well as his: *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (San Francisco 1972); S. Langer, 'The Cultural Importance of Art', in: Id., *Philosophical Sketches* (New York 1962).

available evidence. As the object, in this case, is an image, or rather a corpus of images, one might be tempted to term this essay an effort in iconology. However, the very definitions put forward by the practitioners of that art do not entirely convince because they always seem to require a certain sensibility that, to me, is too gratuitous to deserve a place in the bag of technical and methodical skills the historian can use reconstruct the past.⁹⁶ What we need to do is 'read' images and any other objects not as the fragments as which they have come down to us,⁹⁷ but as evidence about a (segment of a) society and a culture that only can be understood properly if reintegrated in their context.

In a certain sense, the significance of the Case of the Bare Feet seems timeless. For as long as people have made images, specific groups have been trying to use them for their own propagandistic purpose or, on the contrary, to put a ban on their use and influence and, perhaps, introduce new images in their place. An image always is propaganda, part of a power structure it seeks to continue or change.

⁹⁶ Ever since Panofsky 'introduced' this new branch of scholarship, scholars have tried to defend and, in doing so, (re-)define it against the onslaughts of skeptics. I have used: E. Panofsky, *Iconography and Iconology: an Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art* (Garden City 1955), originally: *Studies in Iconology* (Oxford 1939), esp. 26–54; Meaning in the Visual Arts; E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images* (London 1972), esp. 1–25; Introduction. Aims and Limits of Iconology, and 123–198: *Icones Symbolicae*. Philosophies of symbolism and their bearing on art; E.W. Huber, *Ikonomie. Zur anthropologischen Fundierung einer kunstwissenschaftlichen Methode* (Mittenwald/München 1978); E. Kaemmerling (ed.), *Ikonomie und Ikonomie. Theorien. Entwicklung. Probleme* (also under the title *Bildende Kunst als Zeichensystem, I*) (Köln 1979); O. Calabrese (ed.), *Semiotica della Pittura* (Milan 1980); J. Vanbergen, *Voorstelling en Betekenis. Theorie van de kunsthistorische interpretatie* (Assen/Maastricht 1986).

⁹⁷ Thus, I find untenable Kristeller's rather naive position that ideas are not really influenced by economic life, politics, et cetera: P.O. Kristeller (ed.), *Renaissance Thought and the Arts. Collected Essays* (New York 1965, 1980) esp. VIII–IX.

CHAPTER SIX

LUCAS HOLSTE (1596–1661), SCHOLAR AND LIBRARIAN, OR: THE POWER OF BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

Introduction

Seventeenth-century Rome was the actual or spiritual home of many learned men who, through the sheer bulk of their correspondence, the vast extent of their erudite contacts, the weightiness of the many tomes they have left—published or still in manuscript—remain essentially unstudied and thus actually elude our understanding of the *Respublica Litteraria*, of the world of the *Virtuosi*, though, of course, the mere mention of their names may well elicit an ‘oh, yes’ from the listener and reader.

I refer to such men as Leone Allacci (1586–1669), the Greek-born Byzantinist, physician, theologian and librarian, and to Nicholas Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637), the Provençal numismatist, botanist, historian, orientalist, and generally, ‘collectionneur’. I also refer to the German-born Lucas Holste, often referred to as Holstenius, whose importance for the intellectual life of papal Rome is generally acknowledged and constantly underlined. Yet he was a man, paradoxically, of whose political activities we are quite well informed,¹ though we know far less about the actual extent of his cultural significance. The fact that Holstenius’ letters remain largely unpublished² has been rightly lamented but little has been done to remedy it.

Using this rich source,³ this chapter proposes to analyse Holste’s role as an instrument of papal cultural policy through an outline of his main

¹ K. Repgen, ‘Lucas Holstenius als politischer Gutachter in Rom’, in: *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 39 (1959), 342–352.

² Only a section of Holste’s letters has been published: J. Fr. Boissonnade, *Lucae Holstenii Epistolae ad Diversos* (Paris 1817).

³ The data for this chapter are furnished by the enormous collection of letters and

activities as a scholar and his work as the librarian of the two most important 17th-century Roman collections, the Barberini and Vatican Libraries; for both as an erudite in his own right and through his professional activities he gained a central role in the culture of Baroque Rome, where he first arrived precisely in the period the Barberini began their rise to power. Indeed, though at various stages the German scholar became adviser to, and even trusted friend of other powerful persons, like Pope Alexander VII and Queen Christina of Sweden, the Barberini family and, more specifically, Pope Urban VIII and Cardinal Francesco, were to become and remain Holste's most important patrons.

When Holste died, in 1661, he was buried in the church of the 'German Nation' in Rome, the venerable *Sta. Maria dell' Anima*, whose 'provider' he had been for several times. His monument was paid for by his long-time friend and protector, Francesco Barberini. The medallion that forms the centre of the monument shows the two rivers that dominated his life, the Elbe, on whose banks he was born, and the Tiber, that bisected the town where he died. But certainly far more interesting are the three figures that fill the roundel: atop a pyramid, an allegorical female representing Sacred or Church History sits on the left hand, while her sister Geography reclines on the right. Both have one breast bared, the other covered. Obviously, one would have expected Religion, or the Church, to dominate the scene. However, crowning the group is Philosophy, carrying a Sun—a Barberinian and, also a Campanellian image. Both her breasts are bare, as if to suggest that the knowledge she imparts is the most complete. Should one read this as a posthumous reminder of the one great intellectual force in Holste's life, neo-Platonist philosophy? If so, it would also show that Holste's predilection still was shared by his patron Barberini, though the latter had not been able to allow the more extremely materialistic implications of certain neo-Platonist views to be openly aired by the learned men attached to the papal court, such as Tommaso Campanella and Galileo Galilei.⁴ However this may be, Barberini's friendship, and admiration for Holste certainly appear from the epitaph he

other unpublished manuscripts which, on his death in 1661, Holste left to Francesco Barberini, and which thus became part of that family's great library; in 1902 the *Biblioteca Barberiniana* was transferred and incorporated in the Vatican Library, where its rich holdings can now be studied.

⁴ See, also, Chapters II and VIII of this book.

intended for the funeral monument: it is a long, carefully phrased Latin text, lauding every aspect of Holste's rich career.⁵

The early years

Lucas Holste⁶ was born in Hamburg on the 17th of September 1596, the seventh child of Peter Holste, the reasonably well-to-do owner of a cloth-dying business, and Maria Schillings;⁷ through his godparents, he was linked to the Hamburg patriciate. Almost no 'independent' sources remain to inform us about his early years: autobiographical notes, written at the end of his life, give us an impression of his youth, but through a lens obviously clouded by hindsight, and by the understandable need to present his entire life in a logical perspective.

His father first had him taught at home but at the age of five sent him to school. When young Holste reached his fourteenth year, he became the governor of the son of a wealthy Hamburg physician, Nikolaus Tadman. The next year, he was sent to the academy at Rostock but soon left again, deciding never to attend a German academy anymore because of the 'barbaric' culture of the school—a verdict smacking more of the *topos* usually attached to universities rather than, probably, reflecting the reality of his experience.

Holste's father must have done reasonably well, for in 1615 or 1616 he could afford to send his son to the recently founded university of Leyden, in the Protestant Northern Netherlands—chosen, perhaps as much for the commercial contacts between the merchant metropolis on the Elbe and the new mercantile Republic of the United Provinces as for religious reasons.⁸ Thus, Holste left Hamburg, travelling to Holland

⁵ BAV, BL, Vol. 2182, f. 49^r.

⁶ The only life of Holste was written by his fellow-townsmen Nikolaus Wilckens, *Das Leben Lucae Holstenii* (Hamburg 1723). In 1770 M.C. Ziegler published, also in Hamburg: *N. Wilckens' Hamburgischer Ehren-Tempel, in welchem eine Menge [...] Lebensbeschreibungen gelehrter und verdienstvoller Männer, die theils in, theils ausser, Hamburg geboren worden [...] aufgestellt werden, aus den hinterlassenen Handschriften aufgerichtet*, incorporating this and other of Wilckens's biographies. A bibliography of the works of and on Holste was published by H. Coppolecchia-Somers, 'Bibliografie "Luca Holstenio"', in: *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome*, XXXV (1971), 47–64.

⁷ Besides on the printed material, I rely on a manuscript biography of Holste contained in: BAV, BL., Vol. 2182, fols. 1^r–4^v.

⁸ According to *Album Studiosorum* (Leyden/The Hague 1875), col. 125, Holste matriculated as an Arts student on May 26, 1616.

with his older friend Gebhard Elmenhorst, a man of great philosophical learning and an acute sense of the need for an irenic stance in a society torn by religious dispute.

In Leyden, Holste's keen intelligence and his growing erudition earned him the friendship of such scholars-teachers as Philip Cluverius, Daniel Heinsius and Johannes Meursius. Aided by a scholarship from Leyden University, in 1618 he was able to accompany Cluverius, with whom he studied Greek, on a research trip to Italy, traversing the peninsula afoot, even journeying as far as Sicily⁹—not normally one of the stops on a *Peregrinatio Academica*.

After nearly two years, Holste returned to Leyden, to start earning a living as tutor to various young men, while he lodged with the professor of philology, Gilbert Jacchaeus. By now, for the first time he felt attracted to the ideas and ideals of St. Augustine, and contemplated conversion to Roman Catholicism.¹⁰ The fierce strife between the liberal-minded followers of the irenic theologian Arminius, amongst whom Holste counted most of his friends, and the more puritan adherents of the zealot Gommarus, that not only disrupted religious life but threatened also to divide the body politic of the young republic, may well have turned Holste's thoughts in this direction, the more so as the purge which occurred in the following years forced a number of his Dutch acquaintances to leave Leyden, or even the Netherlands. Yet while some of them converted to Catholicism themselves, he did not take this step, yet.

In 1620, the Dutch diplomat Caspar van Vosbergen, whom Holste knew from his early years at Leyden, engaged him as his secretary; therefore, he went to live in The Hague and accompanied his new master on missions to Christian IV of Denmark and to the elector of Saxony. In 1621, two of his brothers joined him in Leyden and, together, they travelled to Holstenia. Some sources erroneously claim that after his return to Leyden he converted to Rome.¹¹

In 1622, Holste crossed the North Sea to England, to study in the libraries of London and Oxford.¹² His interest there was in classical geography, as he planned an edition of the minor Greek geographers—

⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6488, f. 1^r, a letter by Juan Diaz, from Naples, undated, March 1618.

¹⁰ According to Von Pastor, *o.c.*, vol. XIII/-2, 906.

¹¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2182, ff. 3^r–4^v.

¹² On Holste's English sojourn: F.J.M. Blom, 'Lucas Holstenius (1596–1661) and England', in: G. Janssens and J. Aarts, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century English Literature, History and Bibliography* (Amsterdam 1984), 25–39.

which was to become a lifelong project, remaining unfinished as did so many of his visions. He also collected scholarly data for his friends in Holland. After two years, in which he mastered the English tongue, he was engaged by an English nobleman to accompany him to Spain. The plan proved abortive, however, because Holste's patron died en route, in Antwerp.

The next stage in Holste's career was Paris, where he arrived in October, 1624, first securing a post as librarian to Henri de Mesmes, count of Avaux, president of the Paris *Parlement*. Soon, he became a respected member of the circle of the great scholars of the day: the royal librarian Nicolas Rigault, the Du Puy-brothers, Pierre and James—veritable 'information brokers' in the world of learning—, the wealthy and erudite Provençal *parlementier* Nicolas de Peiresc, who had visited England, too, and Gabriel Naudé, who not only wrote the pioneer treatise on librarianship (1627)—one wonders whether Holste read it—but was also to be the real founder and manager of Mazarin's great library.¹³ In 1626, Holste transferred to the house of a French bishop, Mons. De Souvray. Indeed, he was well received in the 'best French houses', and given various stipends. He also befriended the imperial resident in Paris, who brought his name to the emperor's attention as a man who, while being well versed in the affairs of the German states and their religious problems, was a great scholar, too.

After he finally decided to convert to Catholicism in 1624, schooled in his new faith by the Jesuit Fathers Denis Petau (1583–1652) and Jacques Sirmond (1559–1651), both famous Latinists and theologians, Holste started looking for a more permanent job. His friends soon recommended him to one of their Italian correspondents, Francesco Barberini, newly-created cardinal and, more important, nephew of the newly-elected Pope Urban VIII.

The great wealth which always fell to a new papal-royal family, as well as the social customs and cultural norms of the day, practically demanded that the new *nipote* be a magnificent patron in his own right, that he form his personal court and, amongst other things, build up a library of his own. Consequently, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, look-

¹³ On Holste's Parisian circle: L.G. Pélissier, 'Les amis d'Holstenius' in: *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 6 (1886), 554, sqq.; 7 (1887), 62sqq. and 8 (1888), 320, sqq., and in: *Revue des Langues Romaines*, 35 (1891), 321, sqq.; however, Pélissier's data are not entirely correct. Holste only met Naudé in Rome, in 1631: Ph. Tamizey de Larroque, *Les Correspondants de Peiresc. Lettres inédites*, Vols. I–II (Geneva 1972), Vol. II, 49, Pierre Du Puy to Holste.

ing for a scholar to add lustre to his clientele as well as help him with his library, asked Lucas Holste to leave Paris for the *Urbs* and become his secretary and librarian—significantly, the request arrived on the feast of the Annunciation. Holste's entering Barberini's entourage shows that the Cardinal was seriously heeding the anonymous advice given him when he was first called upon to be his uncle's Cardinal-*Padrone*, viz. to create a court made up of famous scholars who would help him realize the propaganda policy which the papacy had to pursue.¹⁴

In the service of the Barberini

In May 1627, Holste left for the *Aeterna* in the suite of the returning papal nuncio, Orazio Spada. He was to live in Rome to the end of his days. From the outset, he was well cared for by his employer, both materially and honourifically. One finds him styled as 'gentilhuomo dell' Eminentissimo Cardinale Barberino',¹⁵ by which title he must have been known until his ordination in 1643.¹⁶ Through Barberini's influence, he was first given some benefices in Northern Germany;¹⁷ amongst these were a prebend in Hamburg, granted him in 1629, and canonries in Cologne and Lübeck.¹⁸ When the Thirty Years' War finally settled the preponderance of the Reformation in this area, Holste first obtained a canonry in the cathedral of Olmütz as well as a prebend in the collegiate church of Bressanone;¹⁹ later he became a canon of St. Peter's itself, as well as a Clerk of the Sacred College.²⁰ All these functions were, of course, sinecures, but they certainly were not unrewarding—they must have brought Holste a very comfortable income of several hundred scudi, annually.

Soon, Holste's reputation was well-established. His fame even came to the notice of that august body, the Lincean Academy, who counted both Pope Urban and his nephew amongst their members. During one

¹⁴ See Chapter III of this book.

¹⁵ Thus in *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6495, f. 78^r, anno 1641.

¹⁶ This would appear from a letter of Honorato Honorati, bishop of Urbino, to Holste, in: *BAV, BL*, 6495, f. 17^r, anno 1643.

¹⁷ Von Pastor, *o.c.*, Vol. XIII/2, 906.

¹⁸ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2182, ff. 33^r–34^v; 38^r–39^r; 23^{r-v}.

¹⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6488, f. 52^r, Holste to Barberini; *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, f. 25^{r-v}, about the Bressanone benefice.

²⁰ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, f. 138^r; Vol. 2182, f. 21^{r-v}.

of their sessions in the late 1620's, the Linceans decided to elect Holste among their number as well, considering he was both an uncommonly gifted linguist and a great scholar of ancient geography:

Il sig. Luca Holstenio, Hamburgnese, Germano, giovane di bonissimi costumi, che si tratta hora apresso il Sig. Cardinale Barberini, dottissimo in tutte le lingue. Porta Greco e Latino e, oltre le altre scienze, è geografo tanto insigne che se n'haverà notabilissima restauratione di questa dottrina con ogni antica erudizione. E persona di tanto studio che continuamente è nello scrutinio delle cose più recondite nelle librerie, e sempre con lavoro di perizia, in modo che se n'haveranno bellissime fatiche, particolarmente d'autori non più visti, quasi tutti illustri con mille annotazioni. A questo effetto ha viaggiato studiosamente per bona parte dell'Europa.²¹

Undeniably, Holste's actual job had its dull sides. He compiled numerous indices, which made accessible Cardinal Barberini's growing collections—of coins, of miniatures—but also the holdings of legal books kept in the Quirinal Palace, and the texts produced by Roman and other printers on the basis of Barberini-manuscripts.²² Yet, far more interestingly, being the learned adviser of the new *Padrone*, with practically unlimited resources at his disposal, Holste started creating the great library that Barberini, a newcomer, proposed to build. In a way, it must have been rather easy, at least as far as the material side of acquisition was concerned, and always taking into account the fierce competition which characterised a courtly centre such as Rome, in this field as in others. Nevertheless it demanded much expertise, the knowledge of what to look for, and where. Although we do not yet know in detail how the process went, it is obvious that in the 1620's and 1630's the Barberini Library rapidly grew, both in size and in the importance of its holdings.²³ What we do know—or rather what my analysis of Holste's letters has shown—is that Barberini, besides buying books, was especially eager to acquire precious manuscripts which in some way or another were of cultural, viz. archaeological, historical, philological, sci-

²¹ G. Gabrieli, ed., 'Verbale delle Adunanze e Cronaca della prima Accademia Lincea (1603–1630)', in: *Memorie della Real Accademia dei Lincei*, Series VI, Vol. II, fasc. VI (Rome 1927), 508.

²² E.g.: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 4236, 3187, 3194–3200, 3166.

²³ Contemporary opinions of the Barberini Library are to be found in: P. Totti, *Ristretto della Grandezza di Roma* (Rome 1637), 110, and especially in: G. Teti, *Aedes Barberina* (Rome 1642), 19–22, 31–34, which is a specially commissioned glorification of the Barberini court by one of the family's clients. Cfr. also: M.V. Hay, 'The Barberini Library', in: *Library Review*, 3 (1931), 164–170.

entific, theological or philosophical value. To this end, Holste was sent on a number of research trips that brought him all over Italy.

Thus, while escorting the famous convert and later cardinal, Prince Friedrich von Hessen-Darmstadt, to Malta in 1637—an episode which should be studied in detail²⁴ if only because Holste apparently advised the Grand Master on the improvement of the island's function as a military bulwark against the Turks—he visited the libraries and manuscript collections of Naples, Messina and Palermo. In the collections of the Basilian Fathers in Messina, which he described as the only real treasure trove he encountered, he found one veritable diamond, a 14th-century manuscript world chronicle in Greek. Whether he was able to secure this gem for Barberini is not clear. However, returning from Malta, he spent several weeks in Naples to conduct some pretty shady deals with the Capuchins, in whose library he also had found much to his and his patron's liking. It appears that, in view of Barberini's power, the poor fathers were practically forced to simply part with the choicest items of their collection.²⁵

The greatest surprise, however, was the marvellous library of Monte Cassino, which sent Holste into rapturous transports.²⁶ There, he found some unknown works of Peter Diaconus, as well as papers relating to the Council of Chalcedon, that was of significance to Rome because of its claims concerning the papal position in the rift that, later, had occurred between the Latin and the Greek Churches. He asked Barberini to send him some of his own books, that he might confront the *status quaestionis* with the new material. In doing so, he was able to correct a number of current scholarly opinions. He also discovered a series of *martyrologia*, amongst which those of Sts. Felicity and Perpetua, which enabled him to correct Cardinal Baronius' famous *martyrologium* on some essential points. In this period, as well in later years, Holste was also gathering material about the lives of the popes, constantly adding to the known corpus of *vitae* although his findings were not always deemed lucky ones, perhaps because some of the facts tended

²⁴ Pastor, *o.c.*, only mentions this interesting episode, in which Athanasius Kircher also was involved, in passing. See, also, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6488, f. 6^r sqq., for the instruction for Holste's trip to Malta, as well as ff. 10^r–39^r, *passim*, and 72^r–86^v; also *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6495, fols. 35^r–41^r.

²⁵ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6488, f. 20^r sqq., description of the Basilian Library; ff. 46^r–50^r, dealings with the Capuchins. In *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, ff. 48^r–51^r, we find the nuncio in Naples negotiating for the transport to Rome of the Capuchin books and manuscripts.

²⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6488, ff. 61^r, 63^r, November 25 and 30, 1637.

to be iconoclastic. Most of this work, however, was not published till long after his death.²⁷ Precisely to get a grip on the enormous amount of material he found in various Italian libraries, Holste spent considerable time in compiling indexes of their collections. Thus, he catalogued the holdings of the library of Monte Cassino, and, on another occasion, the Greek books in the library at Carpi.²⁸

In the early months of 1638, Holste returned to Rome. Perhaps in consequence of his trip, we find Pope Urban issuing a *breve* that, in the same year, forbids the Neapolitan Franciscans to sell any books or manuscripts before having given first refusal to Francesco Barberini—apparently this collection, too, held items of interest to the Pope's nephew.²⁹ The trip must have been considered successful, for in 1641 Holste left on another journey of research and acquisition, this time roaming through 'Etruria'—i.e. Tuscany. Among other things, he tried to trace some manuscripts on the life of Christ, written by Porphyrius—Holste had already published a book on this author's life and works in 1630—but the dusty cupboards of the grand-ducal library in Florence did not yield the desired results.³⁰

Meanwhile, though the Barberini Library must have gained considerably by Holste's travels, it also grew by means peculiar to the power structure of early modern Rome. Thus, persons who, for some reason or other, sought Barberini's favour—as the papal prime minister, he could arrange well nigh anything—did well to please him with the gift of a manuscript, often using Holste as an intermediary.³¹

In the meantime, Holste's status in the world of learning had been rising steadily, both in Rome and in Europe at large. In the papal capital, the ever more magnificent courts of the various Barberini siblings,

²⁷ L. Holstenius, *Passio S. Bonifatii martyris Romani* (Rome 1663); id., *Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (Paris 1664). On Holste's research on the papal *vitae*: FX. Glasschröder, 'Des Lukas Holstenius Sammlung von Papstleben' in: *Römische Quartalschrift für Christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, 4 (1890), 125–133.

²⁸ E.g.: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 304, 3114.

²⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, f. 96^r.

³⁰ According to Von Pastor, *o.c.*, Vol. XIII/2, 908, the diary of this journey is MS. F. 192 of the Dresden State Library. I have not been able to ascertain if it survived the war. On this episode, too: C. Mazzi, 'Luca Holstein a Siena', in: *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Series V, Vol. 10 (1892), 339–355. For the reference to Holste's search for Porphyrius: P. Tannery and C. de Waard (eds.), *Correspondance du P. Marin Mersenne*, Vol. XIII (Paris 1977), 138, Doni to Mersenne, 11 May 1644. Also: L. Holstenius, *Dissertatio de Vita et Scriptis Porphyrii* (Rome 1630). An enlarged edition was published in 1655 and again in 1671.

³¹ See the letters in *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6495, f. 68^{r-v}, and *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6496, f. 42^r.

now partially transferred from the rather modest family place on the *Via dei Gubbonari*, bought by the Pope while still a cardinal, to the stupendous new building erected near Quattro Fontane, were the scene of a vigorous cultural and, more specifically, intellectual life.

Holste was a well-liked member of the Academy which Cardinal Francesco had founded in 1624—another decision which helped him to define his new position as the expected leader of Roman cultural life—and which now gathered in the beautiful nymphaeum of the new palace, with its splendid fountain,³² an academy that functioned in accordance with Barberini's ideas about the role of Divine Wisdom on earth. Meanwhile, in the Basilian monastery in Rome, yet another academy convened regularly, under the aegis of a man who, like Holste, was a Barberini *famigliare*, the well-known scholar and musical theorist Giovanni Batista Doni (1594–1647). The members often discussed topics relating to one of Barberini's, and Holste's, main interests, the question of the differences and similarities between the Greek and Latin Churches.³³

The mind of the man

It is not easy to 'access' Holste's mind. Trying to distil an image of his innermost thoughts from the thousands of letters he wrote, from the introductions to his editions—printed and manuscript—one finds him elusive, still. Yet, there is one letter that seems to reveal as much as, perhaps, we will ever know about him, about the reasons for which he decided to convert to Catholicism, and about his deepest intellectual leanings. He dispatched it in July, 1631, to his old patron and friend Peiresc, who, with his customary but in this case truly remarkable generosity had given him no less than 25 manuscripts, recently acquired, of a scientific-philosophical nature which Holste greatly coveted. Holste wrote:

I would like to testify, from the depth of my heart (...) that up till now no one ever has favoured me more and with a more welcome gift than you have, and to no one does my research owe as much as to you. For in your remarkable benevolence and almost overgenerous friendship you have given me access to the texts of those authors which I have tried to acquire

³² Cfr. especially the work by G. Teti, *o.c.*

³³ Von Pastor, *o.c.*, Vol. XIII/2, 910.

without grudging myself the expense (...) in order to be able—devoting myself entirely to them—to read them for myself and to give them to the public. As a very young man, already, I was attracted to Platonist philosophy by the lecture of Maximos of Tyre, Chalcidius and Hierocles; I felt growing in me a fierce desire, first to know more, and then to use all my forces to bring such a divine way of philosophizing to mankind, and to promote it. The remarkable use to which I could put these studies, only has strengthened this effort. For seeing that Bessarion, Steuchos and others confirmed the teachings of Plato through their reading of the Fathers of the Church, I turned completely to those Latin and Greek texts that deal with this contemplative and mystic theology, which excites the soul to God. Consequently, I came to admire greatly the divine and true way of philosophizing of the Fathers. Almost unknowingly, I began to feel myself part of the Catholic Church again, an experience also felt by Saint Augustine, as he testifies in his Confessions. These divine contemplations really turned my mind to the knowledge of Truth, and confirmed it. From then on, I had a basis from which to act in my encounters with the nonsense and the petty arguments that usually move those who recently deal with the Faith.

Among the texts Holste received and began to annotate, in view of a subsequent edition, were several commentaries on Platonic writings, such as Proklos's notes on Plato's theology. Holste studied these texts, comparing them with other ones which he had copied during his stay in England or had acquired in Paris, among which the neo-Platonist text on physics by Michael Psellos, and with texts which he found and had copied either in the Vatican, or in the Barberini libraries. Favourites were Hermeias's notes to the *Phaedros*, but Holste also was charmed by Jamblichos of Chalcis's 'Life and Works of Pythagoras', a neo-Platonist interpretation with strong occult tendencies.

However, Holste did not realize his plans for the edition of various neo-Platonist texts. Precisely in the early 1630's, the cultural climate in Rome changed rather dramatically. The liberal atmosphere that had characterized the early years of Urban's pontificate disappeared, if only because such *causes célèbres* as the Campanella- and Galilei-cases, which both had neo-Platonist and, even more dangerous, materialist philosophical implications, seriously threatened the theological and hence political unity of the Counter-Reformation Church.³⁴ Neither the Pope, nor his nephew Francesco, Holste's patron, could afford to risk any scandals, whatever their private philosophical-theological opinions might once have been, or still were. Of course, it is all too easy to put

³⁴ See, also, Chapters II and VIII of this book.

this down to a mere desire to hold on to power at all costs on the part of the Curia. Nor would it be fair to accuse Holste of intellectual dishonesty, though, admittedly, he does not seem to have been the kind of courageous person who would be willing to endanger his career for the good cause of scholarship. Indeed, Holste may well have realized that the times—the Thirty Years' War seemed to spell the final ruin of Rome's supremacy, which was challenged on other fronts as well—asked for unity, rather than for an attitude that would open the Church of Rome to all kinds of accusations of accepting, or even fomenting heterodox ideas.

Yet, Holste continued, in his own way and, admittedly, not in the open, to voice his criticism of such bigotry as he often encountered. In 1633, he complained to Peiresc about the ignorance of some of the cardinals who sat on the Congregation of the Index, who judged which books were, and which were not to be read by the faithful, telling that he was so angered by some of the things they said that he had decided never to attend anymore. In the same letter, he tells about the judgement passed on Galilei:

Surely, nobody can see without indignation how Galilei's book, and the entire body of Pythagoreic or Copernican knowledge is judged by men who have no idea of mathematics and of the course of the planets, and no interest in physics, precisely where the authority of the Church is at stake that will be seriously impaired by a wrong judgement. I urgently admonish them to realize that the oldest authors were mathematicians who, with remarkable fervour, devoted themselves to the cause of truth and that precisely those who in recent times have resurrected that knowledge in their scholarship have almost equalled the Ancients. Galilei has been brought down by the hate and jealousy of those who feel that only he stands in the way of their being viewed as the best mathematicians.

However, neither Holste's strong opinion in this matter, nor the more daring for openly critical tone adopted by his friend Peiresc in a letter to Francesco Barberini, could move the Roman authorities.

Between North and South

For all its limitations, Holste flourished in the Roman milieu. His knowledge of North-European affairs was useful to Francesco Barberini in his quality as papal foreign secretary. In 1630, Holste was sent on missions to Poland, to negotiate with King Sigismund and bring the red hat to Monsignore Santacroce, the papal nuncio in Warsaw; he

also went to Vienna, where Emperor Ferdinand asked him to oversee the reformation of the monastery of Augustinian canonesses attached to the Hofburg—the imperial family being greatly in favour of the new, observant movement of the Agostiniani Scalzi, the barefooted Augustinians, that had sprung up in the Order in the previous decades.³⁵

Holste's contacts in high places and his own position enabled him to be of help to many, and thus make a great number of friends. He was certainly a great support to all the 'Germans' who came to Rome, and, often carrying letters of recommendation, presented themselves to their most influential countryman at the papal court, as was, of course, quite normal for anyone who went on a trip, whether it was of an academic, cultural, diplomatic or religious nature. For them, and others, Holste secured audiences with the pope and the cardinals—for the highborn—or monetary help, for the lowlier ones.

More important, perhaps, was his ability to present his friends and acquaintances as candidates for the many jobs that were in the Curia's giving—many letters written to him clearly show the gratitude of those who had thus been helped, or asked to be assisted in this way.³⁶ Or, as one bishop, residing in a backwater cathedral town, put it: while being "lontano dai virtuosi" meant a kind of cultural exile, the "esser lontano dalla corte" meant that one was often denied promotion if no mighty intercessor was willing to lend a hand.³⁷

In a more specific, professional way, Holste was often asked to use his position as librarian to enable scholars from all over Europe to pursue their research on the basis of Roman material. For example, people asked him to wield his influence to obtain permission to borrow manuscripts from the *Barberiniana*. Gronovius was helped in this way in 1641,³⁸ and the Maronite priest and scholar, Abraham Ecchellen, while working in Paris on the Polyglot Bible, even managed to have books and manuscripts sent, there.³⁹ Some people, however, were disappointed in their expectations, like Marin Mersenne, the famous mathematician from the Order of Minims, who in 1644 sought entrance to the Vatican Library and discovered not only that Holste could not help him, but also that he and other friends, like the learned Greek scholar

³⁵ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2182, f. 4^{r-v}; 6^{r-v}; 8^r. Cfr. also chapter V of this book.

³⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6496, ff. 5^r, 6^r, 14^r, 104^r.

³⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, f. 152^r.

³⁸ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6488, f. 89^r; another example: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6496, f. 26^r.

³⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6499, ff. 1^{r-4r}, anno 1641. Cfr. chapter VII of this book.

Leone Allacci (1586–1669), who himself was attached to the “Vaticana”, had problems in circumventing the Cerberus-like restrictions imposed by the library’s current *custos*, the orientalist Horatio Giustiniani.⁴⁰

Of course, the system worked both ways. Many persons regaled Holste with their unasked for manuscripts, hoping he might read them, and perhaps, in thus flattering him, hoping to secure his help in their publication.⁴¹ He often obliged.⁴²

Being a scholar and living in a world which increasingly valued knowledge and scholarship not only as a sign of culture but also as a means of power, then as now meant living in a milieu characterized by professional jealousies, accusations of plagiarism, petty intrigues about jobs and positions, incriminations of stealing one another’s discoveries and ideas. Consequently, the correspondences of the 17th century resound with the clamour of battles fought and reputations vociferously destroyed. Holste, being prominent and successful, had his own opponents. Whether or not the criticism levelled against him was justified, is almost impossible to judge, now. Two episodes may serve to illustrate the situation.

In 1636 Holste’s character, ambitions and ways were analysed with great acuity in a letter written by Gabriel Naudé (1600–1653) to their mutual friend Peiresc, concentrating on Holste’s rivalry with Leone Allacci:

Le mal entendu d’entre luy (sc. Allacci) et Mr. Holstenius n’est pas digne de vous mettre en peine, d’autant qu’il est fort leger et presque imperceptible à ceux qui ne pénètrent pas dans l’interieur de tous les deux ensemble, car ils se parlent, voyent et entreservent mutuellement, et exepté cette jalousie que chacun a de vouloir prevenir son compagnon à publier ou se servir de certains manuseripts qui leur viennent entre les mains, tout le reste va bien, quoy qu’à dire vray le seigneur Leone ne peut quasi faire autre chose, que ce qu’il fait en cette occasion. Car en effet Mr. Holstenius, comme il a une tres grande capacité, conçoit aussi de tres grandes desseins, et le plus souvent bien differens les uns des autres, comme seroit, par exemple, d’imprimer tous les Geographes anciens, de recueillir aussi toutes les oeuvres semblables des Philosophes Platoni-

⁴⁰ Tannery and de Waard, *o.c.*, Vol. XIII, 283, 413. Holste to Doni, December 24, 1644; March 25, 1645; also Tamizey, *o.c.*, Vol. II, 131, J.-J. Bouchard to Peiresc, March 7, 1636.

⁴¹ E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6495, f. 61^{r-v}.

⁴² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, f. 129^r, the bishop of Città Nuova, publishing one of his many works on his diocese’s history, *anno* 1641; *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6499, f. 3^r, where Abraham Ecchellen (see Chapter VII of this book) calls Holste the ‘promotore’ of his edition of the letters of St. Anthony.

ciens, de faire imprimer tous les Autheurs manuscrits et anciens qui ont escript de la vie des Papes, et autres semblables, lesquels comme ils sont de tres grande haleine, aussi ne les peut-il pas finir si promptement, veu qu'encore il y travaille avec assés de relasche. Cependant, comme il croit tousjours d'accomplir ces desseins, aussi a-t-il déplaisir que quelqu'un entreprenne rien de ce qui on peut despendre; et, au contraire, le sr. Leone Allatio, qui est d'un naturel ardent et expeditif, se trouvant beaucoup de petits Autheurs qui concernent ces matières, se fasche de n'avoir pas la liberté d'en faire ce qu'il veut, et d'estre empesché par ces desseins qui ne se finissent jamais, de publier ce qui peut estre avantageux pour luy et pour le public, et d'exempter les siens qui sont tous prêts, et n'attendent que la commodité des Imprimeurs.⁴³

This quotation sketches, in a nutshell, some of Holste's characteristics: his intelligence, his creativity, his ambition and his apparent inability to really finish the many over-ambitious projects he envisaged and started, all the time monopolizing precious manuscript sources other people liked to work on as well. It also sketches the grave problems of the 17th-century scholarly brotherhood, problems that certainly were not peculiar to Holste only. This community, in its widest sense the *Respublica Litteraria*, was rife with the negative characteristics common to any academic society. Like many others, Holste did not succeed in living up to the ideal image this 'Republic' had of itself, and that has been, consciously or unconsciously, perpetuated by its later chroniclers, well into the present century.⁴⁴

Several years later, in 1644, Holste, while working on the edition and translation into Latin of Arrianus's originally Greek treatise on hunting, *De Venatione*, decided to publish it in Paris. John van Vliet (1620–1666), a young Dutch scholar, was working on this text too—whether or not known to Holste is not altogether clear. The scholar Claude Sarrau, taking Van Vliet's side—whether there was a side to take is unclear as well—wrote to his colleague André Rivet that the manuscript used by Holste had been 'given' to him by Saumaise, who 'had' it from the Palatine Library, at Heidelberg. However "cet ingrât n'en dit pas un mot; c'est ce qu'on apprend en Italie de s'approprier ce qu'appartient

⁴³ Tamizey, *o.c.*, Vol. II, 47–49, but especially 68–69, Naudé to Peiresc, November 30, 1635. Amicable relations between Allacci and Holste were re-established several months later: Naudé to Peiresc, June 30, 1636, in: Idem, Vol. II, 83.

⁴⁴ Cfr the critical analysis in: P.J. Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History* (London 1998), 284–300.

a autrui”.⁴⁵ Should Holste not have edited the manuscript, because Saumaise might have wanted to do so, too? Should he have stopped working on it to enable Van Vliet to continue and complete his edition—which the Dutchman did anyhow? However this may be, from this episode the present-day editors of the Sarrau-Rivet letters construct a case of malice aforethought when they dwell on it again in another context: in 1645 Holste is reported to have published the letters of St. Ignatius, though, again, someone—this time, Isaac, the young, soon to be famous son of the famous classical scholar G.J. Vossius—was working on them. Sarrau wrote to his correspondent: “la friponnerie de Holstenius lui aura servi [...] pour en diligenter l’impression”, and Rivet, a bit surprised, replies: “Je n’avoy pas sçeu qu’Holstenius eust voulu pocher l’ouvrage de Vossius”.⁴⁶ Given the fact that Holste never published an edition of these letters, the malicious effect of such unfounded gossip must be judged seriously indeed, but it was entirely characteristic of the atmosphere in the European scholarly community.

Printing and power: the Barberini Press

In the context of the Barberini’s involvement in various forms of scholarly interaction, one particular Holstenian episode should not go unmentioned. During the year 1636 and the early months of 1637, before Holste left on his trip to Malta, Barberini asked his advice on a matter which the Cardinal had very much at heart: the quality of the presses operated by the papal government. However, a problem arises in identifying the precise printing office that was the object of Barberini’s main concern and criticism.

According to a short note by the 18th-century scholar who catalogued Holste’s papers, we are confronted with documents⁴⁷ dealing with the affairs of the *Typographia Polyglotta*, the printing office of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, the papal Ministry of Missionary

⁴⁵ H. Bots and P. Leroy (eds.), *Correspondance intégrale d’André Rivet et de Claude Sarrau*, vol. II (Amsterdam 1980), 239–240, Sarrau to Rivet, April 1, 1644.

⁴⁶ Bots and Leroy, *o.c.*, Vol. III (Amsterdam 1982), 208, 219, 234: Sarrau to Rivet, September 8, 1645; Rivet to Sarrau, September 19, and October 2, 1645.

⁴⁷ The relevant documents are in: *BAV*, *BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 231^r, 232^r–233^v, 237^r, 238^{r-v}, 239^f, sqq., 244^f–245^v.

Affairs.⁴⁸ The press had been founded in 1626, as a logical corollary of the foundation of the *Propaganda* itself in 1622; for indeed, what better instrument for spreading the Faith than the printed word? After the quite considerable sum of 18,000 *scudi* had been invested in its equipment, the *Polyglotta* had in short time become worthy of its name, printing in some 23 languages, from Arabic to Chaldean and Syrian. However, as its products were not sold but distributed free of charge, financial troubles were inevitable.

In 1638, the influential and intelligent secretary of the *Propaganda*, Mgr. Francesco Ingoli, finally analysed the now acutely problematic situation; in veiled terms he accused the Apostolic Chamber, the papal Ministry of Finance, of niggardliness because it grudged the press its monthly allowance of one hundred *scudi*, pointedly referring to the Dutch East India Company, which according to him spent a fortune to aid the missionary activities of the heretical ministers of the Dutch Republic, and to the famous Greek and oriental presses operating in Holland. But was this the problem Barberini's initiative sought to solve by establishing a new Press?

One thing is certain: in 1638, the Cardinal decided to establish a Latin and Greek Press in his official residence, the *Palazzo della Cancelleria*. Holste was to be its director, and hence was asked to prepare a memorandum on the costs of equipping and running such an enterprise.

Taking the Parisian 'Imprimerie Royale' as his example, Holste first set out to ascertain the availability of enough punches and matrices to enable the casting of a working collection of type. Besides the *Propaganda's* own collection, there was the famous set of Greek type, formerly in the possession of the Salviati family, but which they had sold to Venice. However, in Spring 1637, one Herman Khircher and one Christofano, type founders, supplied the new Barberini Press with a sizeable collection of 957 type, both Latin and Greek, including some italic sets, at a price of 450,70 *scudi*.⁴⁹ Other type seems to have been cast in the following months, requiring a total expenditure of 1800 *scudi*. Meanwhile, Holste wrote Barberini that the annual cost of running the Press would be some 400 *scudi* in equipment and salaries.

⁴⁸ On the Press, see: W. Henkel, *Die Druckerei der Propaganda Fide: eine Dokumentation* (Paderborn/ Wien 1977), which has nothing about this episode.

⁴⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 231^r gives an exhaustive description of the different kinds of type.

Strangely, we do not know what exactly happened next. Serious doubts about the actual viability of continuing the operations of the *Typographia Polyglotta* were officially voiced for the first time in the last months of 1637 and in 1638. It was then that Ingoli started his counter-attack, defending the Press's singular importance. Yet, in the years that followed there were even thoughts of dismantling it. The crisis was only resolved in 1642, with the reorganized installation of the Press in the newly-built *Propaganda*-palace on *Piazza di Spagna*.

In view of all this, Barberini's initiative to set up a new Greek and Latin Press does not seem to have been an adequate solution to the *Polyglotta's* problems. Therefore, perhaps, the identification of the documents cited is mistaken. It seems reasonable to offer an alternative interpretation, for which some arguments are available.

From the letters exchanged between Holste and Peiresc as well as from letters written by Peiresc to Barberini, we know that in 1635 both the Cardinal and his librarian expressed their concern over the disorganized state of affairs at the *Typographia Vaticana*, the Vatican Library's own Press,⁵⁰ amongst other things lamenting the ugliness of its (Greek) type—Holste, perhaps, complaining on the basis of his experiences with his Porphyrius-edition. Peiresc agreed and in a long letter commented upon the possible remedies, suggesting a reorganisation along the lines of the Royal Press in Paris. He also expressed approval of a 'plan' of Barberini's. Surely this must refer to the project of the Greek and Latin Press—were not these the most important languages represented in the Vatican's own collection and used in its own publications? Thus we may, perhaps, decide that Barberini's initiative was aimed at the improvement of the *Typographia Vaticana*, and that it served its aim, too.⁵¹

⁵⁰ On the early 17th-century vicissitudes of the Vatican Press, see: P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Printing Baronius's "Annales Ecclesiastici" (Rome 1588–1607) in: *Quaerendo*, 13 (1983), 87–102. For Holste's complaints to Peiresc: Boissonnade, *o.c.*, 274–280. Peiresc to Barberini: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, ff. 193^v–194^v, May 1635.

⁵¹ One possible small objection to my hypothesis remains: in 1636, J.J. Bouchard wrote to Peiresc that new Greek letters were being made for the *Vaticana*—but he added that production had started four or five years previously. Tamizey, *o.c.*, Vol. II, 133, Bouchard to Peiresc, April 4, 1636.

Favours continued

With the death of Urban VIII in 1643, the influence of the Barberini temporarily waned, but though its source now fell dry, their much-criticized wealth remained virtually intact for another century. Francesco and his two brothers—the other Barberini cardinal and the prince of Palestrina—went on spending fortunes on whatever forms of patronage they favoured. The new pope, Innocent X Pamphilij, initially rather inimical of his predecessor's family, soon came around—rumour had it that Holste was partly instrumental in this—and even helped them, and their clients, to retain their influence, only asking the hand of one of their daughters for his nephew—and, of course, a sizeable dowry to go with it.

Thus, while Holste continued to be a favourite at the court of Cardinal Francesco, he became *persona grata*, too, at the court of the new pope. And though Innocent never became a patron of the arts in the grand style of the Barberini, Holste's scholarship was esteemed, as well as being considered of practical value to policy-making in the Curia.

For example, we find him an adviser to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, concerned with all sorts of missionary matters both in Europe and overseas. In 1651, he composed a memorandum on the training of future missionaries, arguing over maps to be given to priests who ventured to other continents and discussing the difficult question of the Chinese Rites—concerning the ways especially the Jesuits had felt they should accommodate Christianity to Chinese customs. We also find him admonishing a German princess who, a convert herself, was sent back to her country to try and make some more proselytes in her family.⁵² It is clear Holste was considered an expert on matters of liturgy, too.⁵³

The apotheosis of Holste's professional career came in 1653, when he was promoted to the much-coveted, for highly prestigious, position of first custodian of the Vatican Library, succeeding Cosimo Ricciardi. Though the *Vaticana*, then as now, was nominally presided over by a cardinal-librarian—a function which, for its status, was usually reserved for one of the reigning pope's nephews—the first custodian was the

⁵² Instances in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, ff. 3^r, 64^r, 67^r; *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6496, fo. 28^r. On the 1651 memoir: E. Sastre Santos, 'Un memorial de Lucas Holstenius sobre la propagación de la fe' in: *Euntes Docete. Commentaria Urbaniana Roma*, 35 (1982), 507–524.

⁵³ *BAV, BL*, 6496, f. 40^r.

actual director of the greatest library in Rome, the keeper of one of the most important collections of books and manuscripts in the world. No wonder letters of congratulation started coming in from all over Europe, praising Holste for his *virtù*, that mixture of accomplishments, creativity, merits and learning which, according to his eulogists, made his nomination such a deserved one.⁵⁴

Holste's new position must have added greatly to his responsibilities, and he did not shirk them. The archives of the Vatican Library still contain the many memorials he composed and issued to ensure the proper gestation of this big organization, which had not been functioning at all well. Nevertheless, other tasks were to be his when, in 1655, Cardinal Fabio Chigi became Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667).

Holste and Alexander VII

From the outset, the new *pontifex* aimed at the restoration of Rome's former, imperial grandeur, in all its aspects. Much was expected of him. One of Holste's correspondents wrote, echoing sounds that had also been heard when Urban VIII ascended the throne: "speremo che le lettere, e dottrina, si rimetteranno in fiore per l'Italia con questo nuovo pontefice".⁵⁵ Nor was he alone in voicing this hope. Alexander did not disappoint those who felt that the Pamphilij pontificate had been a cultural desert. In fact, in many ways he continued where Pope Urban had left off. Restoration and new building activities changed the face of Rome, giving its centre its present Baroque aspect.⁵⁶ Like Urban before him, Alexander, an educated and even scholarly man, not only wanted to make Rome the visual "caput mundi", he also strove to remake it into the capital of the invisible, but nevertheless real and powerful world of learning, to ensure that the perilously diverging worlds of Christian doctrine and intellectual life would remain united, both bowing to the supreme authority of the Church, and that of the pope, as the mediator between Heavenly Wisdom and the Earth. To this end, Alexander spent much time, effort and money on the

⁵⁴ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, *passim*.

⁵⁵ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 106^v, Giovanni la Noue to Holste, May 8, 1655.

⁵⁶ See: Rietbergen, *Pausen, o.c.*, chapter VII.

Roman university, the *Sapienza*,⁵⁷ which first had been revitalized by Urban VIII, finishing the palace which housed it and creating a great library where there had been no books whatsoever—and, of course, then naming it *Biblioteca Alessandrina*⁵⁸—and endowing new chairs as well as starting a botanical garden.

However, he also stimulated scholarship outside the university milieu as much as possible. The old Vatican Library, the new *Sapienza*-collection and the private library of the Chigi family, started, under Alexander's aegis, by his nephew, the Cardinal-*Padrone* Flavio Chigi in unabashed emulation of the *Biblioteca Barberiniana* established by Francesco Barberini, were the obvious targets of his patronage. If only therefore, the learned and experienced keeper of the *Vaticana* who by now was considered one of Rome's leading scholars, was a welcome collaborator.

So Holste's star rose higher than ever before. The Pope consulted him on all kinds of matters which, somehow, related to his special expertise: the Oriental Churches, classical learning, library management, and other topics. Most of the often erudite inscriptions which, due to Alexander's positive inscriptomania, adorn the buildings of papal Rome to this day—often vying for pride of place with the Barberini bees—, are the result of the collaboration between the Pope and his favourite German scholar. Usually, Alexander's two preferred architects, Gianlorenzo Bernini and Pietro da Cortona, informed him of the amount of space available on a façade or wall, and of the number of lines and letters it would take; the Pope then sent a little note to Holste, with his own ideas or a set of alternatives, asking for improvements or other suggestions.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, Holste went on with his own research—always, or so I think, keeping an eye on the practical, even political side of his scholarly enterprises. Thus, in 1658, he published the work which today not only is considered his greatest discovery, but also his most important

⁵⁷ At present, I am preparing a monograph on the *Sapienza* in the late 16th and the 17th century.

⁵⁸ P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Papal Patronage and Propaganda. Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667), the Bibliotheca Alessandrina and the Sapienza-complex' in: *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome*, N.S., 15 (1986), 157–177, as well as: Id., 'Creating a University Library. Pope Alexander VII and the Bibliotheca Alessandrina' in: *Journal of Library History*, 22/2 (1987), 190–205.

⁵⁹ Rietbergen, Pausen, *o.c.*, chapter II, *passim*.

contribution to scholarship: the *Liber Diurnus Romanorum Pontificum*, a book of forms used in the papal chancery since the ninth century and which had shaped papal administrative practice for a very long period.⁶⁰

Other honourable tasks fell to Holste as well. The much discussed removal of one of Italy's most famous libraries, that of the former dukes of Urbino, to Rome, where its contents were divided between the new *Alessandrina*, the *Chigiana* and the *Vaticana*, was devised and supervised by him, among others.⁶¹

Perhaps his greatest honour was bestowed upon him in Autumn, 1655, when Pope Alexander named him his special legate, to travel to Innsbrück and there receive the profession of faith which the best-known convert of the 17th century, Queen Christina of Sweden, would swear in his hands. Obviously, Holste's Northern European origins, his own status as a convert, his continuous dealings with other high-born neophytes and his international standing as a scholar were all considered qualities that would make him *persona grata* to the high-spirited and cultured virago from the Lutheran North, who was about to make her stormy descent upon the Catholic South.⁶² According to all accounts, the mission was a success.

Buyers and sellers: bookmen at work

In the hurly-burly of this rich life, Holste had to fit his tasks as the keeper of, by now, two great libraries: the *Vaticana* and the *Barberiniana*. However, since his meeting with Christina proved to be the basis of a life-long friendship, he soon became involved with yet a third library:

⁶⁰ Four hundred years after its first publication in Rome, the definitive edition appeared in Bern: H. Foerster, *Liber Diurnus Romanorum Pontificum* (Berne 1958). The manuscript Holste discovered is now *Codex Vaticanus XI 19*, and dates from the eight or ninth century. In the 19th century, a second version was discovered in Milan, known as: *MS Ambrosianum I 2 Sup.* On the history and significance of the manuscripts see: Foerster, *o.c.*, 9–15, and A. Ratti, 'La fine di una leggenda ed altre spigolature intorno al *Liber diurnus Romanorum Pontificum*' in: *Rendiconti del Real Istituto Lombardo*, 46 (1913), 340–341. The relevant documents are in *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6487.

⁶¹ On this operation: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 6498 and 6535, *passim*.

⁶² The episode is fully recounted in Von Pastor, *o.c.*, Vol. XIV/2, 340–341. The relevant documents are in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6487.

he was the ex-Queen's natural adviser when, from 1659 onwards, she finally settled down and started her own considerable collection of books and manuscripts.⁶³

Amidst all this bustle, Holste could not, of course, forget his first duty as Barberini's librarian. Nor did he. Hunting for manuscripts, he never forgot that they, though certainly desirable both as precious objects in themselves and as important sources of knowledge and learning, were not the only elements which made up the library he was creating for the Cardinal. An extensive and representative collection of contemporary authors and their printed works in every field was what Barberini desired and what Holste, being a collector himself, strove after, too, though undoubtedly on a far more modest scale. Hence, it was one of Holste's duties to be informed as comprehensively as possible about new publications both in Rome, in Italy and, indeed, from all over Europe.

Precisely because books were such an important element in papal propaganda—both as carriers of messages and as objects in themselves, to fill the libraries that then were consulted by scholars who would be beholden to their papal owners—it is important to understand how a librarian like Holste went about purchasing them. Yet, we do not know yet how this was actually managed, certainly not during the early period of Holste's librarianship in Barberini's service. Admittedly, in Holste's own papers, letters from booksellers do survive, but they do not indicate a great volume of purchases.⁶⁴ A thorough search of the gigantic Barberini Archives, which are now becoming accessible to the public through the dedicated cataloguing of the staff of the Vatican Library as well as other scholars, might eventually throw some light on this problem, but as yet we do not really understand the 'system'.

Of course, Rome had many publishers and booksellers who must have been able to supply Barberini with just about every book printed in the various towns of Italy. However, for information about non-Italian titles, produced beyond the Alps, the Cardinal had to fall back on his own international correspondence and on the foreign friends of his librarian. Indeed, Holste's learned acquaintances did, of course,

⁶³ Von Pastor, *o.c.*, Vol. XIV/2, 352.

⁶⁴ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6496, f. 15^r; *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6496, ff. 31^r–45^v, letters from Giovanni Battista Bidelli, a Milanese bookseller, covering the years 1647–1650; ff. 55^r–69^v, several letters from Gaspare Bonesano, another bookseller from Milan, dating from 1641, 1645 and 1648.

serve this aim. Thus, we find him making notes of the recently-published titles mentioned in the letters Gabriel Naudé wrote to him and then, apparently, ordering them.⁶⁵ Also, an Italian friend, the Venice-based bishop of Città Nuova, Giacomo Filippo Tomasini, had contacts with Europe's greatest book market, the Frankfurt Fair, through a bookseller named Julius Weiseldeck,⁶⁶ from which Holste profited as well.

Yet, an often irregular exchange of letters between scholars hardly could be the basis for a systematic acquisition policy for a huge library. To actually buy books, Barberini, or rather Holste could rely on the, often rather limited, stock of Italian booksellers, or, again, use their international relations. Another possibility was, of course, to order directly from the main centres of the Northern European book market: Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Paris. As, however, the logistics of such direct contacts were not at all easy, using professional help was obviously the most sensible thing to do.

Therefore, the find of a fascinating correspondence between Holste and a Venetian firm of booksellers with extensive international dealings deserves closer inspection, the more so since these letters not only shed some interesting light on the business of the book trade *stricto sensu*, but illuminate the cultural context as well.⁶⁷ I first propose to explore the background of Holste's Venetian connections, and then go on to the technicalities of the book trade before ending with the more general aspects of Holste's relationship with this firm, which his *carteggio* also allows us to grasp.

The *carteggio* opens with a letter by one 'Giovanni la Noue', sent from Venice and dated 17 January 1648. Gradually the letters reveal more information about the man who, for thirteen years, must have been one of Holste's most important book suppliers. In 1648 Giovanni la Noue—Johannes de la Noué—arrived in the city on the lagoons,⁶⁸ since the invention of printing one of the most important centres of the Italian book trade.⁶⁹ Johannes came from the Netherlands, more specifically

⁶⁵ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6488, f. 93^r, a short list of titles culled from Naudé's letters.

⁶⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, f. 104^r.

⁶⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484.

⁶⁸ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 1^r.

⁶⁹ We do know very little about Venetian booksellers and publishers in the seventeenth century, sorely lacking such studies as P. Manzi, 'Editori, tipografi e librai napoletani a Venezia nel secolo XVI', in: *La Bibliografia*, 76 (1974), pp. 35–138. I have consulted H.F. Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press* (London 1891).

from the Dutch Republic, where his family, probably of the Roman Catholic persuasion, lived in Leyden and, later, in Utrecht: at one time he tells Holste his mother hailed from that town and now wants to return there, to prepare for her death.

Actually Johannes's background was quite complicated. His mother, Catherine van Gelder, first married his father, Nicholas de la Noué, whose profession is given as 'speelman'—musician, or fiddler. From this union, Johannes was born in Leyden in 1622; there also was a daughter, named Clasina. After Nicholas's death, Catherine remarried with Johannes Origanus, a physician. When he died, too, his widow married for the third time, now choosing a lawyer, the German-born Andreas Fries. From this marriage at least one son was born, Andries Fries (1630–1675).⁷⁰

Whether Johannes ever attended an academy is not clear. Nor do we know why he left the Low Countries for Italy and settled there. Obviously, however, he knew Holste before his arrival in Venice. He evidently had been in some sort of periodical contact with Barberini's librarian, supplying him with books; for in 1648 he promises to 'go on' looking for new titles and notifying Holste about them, as indeed he does in the following year. Things were not easy, however, as Holste seemed to order titles which were not exactly recent and about which, therefore, the famous catalogues of the bi-annual Frankfurt Book Fair gave little or no information.⁷¹

The first letters reveal that La Noue has started some form of collaboration with the Venetian firm of Combi, booksellers. However, the precise nature of his involvement in the firm's dealings is not yet clear. La Noue goes on corresponding with Holste on his own account though using the Combi's address; also, he apparently is travelling as Combi's Northern European agent, visiting the Autumn and Spring fairs at Frankfurt in 1650 and 1651. At the same time he is reconnoitring the Italian market for 'ultramontane' books, i.e. books published in, specifically, Northern, Protestant Europe; he asks Holste to advise him on the kind of titles people in Rome are likely to buy; he may then

⁷⁰ Data from: I.H. van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse Boekhandel, 1680–1725*, Vol. IV (Amsterdam 1967), 116–117, as well as from the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, Vol. II (Leiden 1912), cols. 459–459, which adds to our information the hypothesis of the Roman Catholic background of the family. For Giovanni's remark about his mother: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, fols. 98^{r-v}.

⁷¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 2^r, 5^r, February 20, 1649 and May 20, 1651.

bear these in mind when visiting Frankfurt. However, he also notes no buyers will be found in Italy for any books written in German.⁷²

In January 1652 the situation became clear, as La Noue entered into a real *compagnia* with Combi; the official name of the company was changed to “Sebastiano Combi e Giovanni la Noue, mercanti di libri”.⁷³

Apparently, the Combi firm had been in a shambles for several years, so the partners immediately started taking stock and preparing a catalogue. First, they sorted out the books in the warehouse, then went through the merchandise in the Combi-house and finally inventoried the masses of books in the shop itself.⁷⁴ The job proved worth while: in October 1652, La Noue was able to write to Holste that a catalogue of all non-Italian titles in the firm’s possession was being printed and would speedily be sent to the customers. It must have appealed to the market immediately, for even in December a number of Holste’s orders from the Combi-catalogue could no longer be filled. From then on a catalogue was produced annually and sent to Holste, with the admonition to order quickly.⁷⁵ The same occurred when the bi-annual Frankfurt catalogues arrived in Venice.⁷⁶ The firm even supplied Holste with the catalogues of the famous house of Merian.⁷⁷

However, lest this lead us to think that the catalogues were the backbone of the business contacts between Combi-La Noue and their Roman customer—which would not be altogether untrue—let us have a closer look at routine proceedings.

Combi and La Noue bought books either to put them in stock or to a customer’s specific order. In the latter case, and if only one copy was involved, the amount of paper work and time which the process entailed was quite staggering, the more so if we keep in mind how slow postal traffic and the transport of goods, either by land or by sea, often were.⁷⁸ It might happen that Holste ordered one or more titles but forgot all about them during the long intervening period, which might

⁷² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 5^r, May 20, 1651.

⁷³ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 17^r, May 11, 1652.

⁷⁴ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 19^r, June 8, 1652.

⁷⁵ I have been able to find one copy only: *Catalogus Librorum in officina Combi et Lanou prostantium* (Venice 1659), but the fact of the annual catalogues is borne out by the letters; e.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 87^r, October 25, 1654.

⁷⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 17^r, 96^r, 108^r, 125^r, 128^r.

⁷⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 97^r, 108^r.

⁷⁸ E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 75^r, which gives an account of the problems involved.

last eight or nine months; he even might order them anew—or show surprise at their eventual, by then unexpected arrival.⁷⁹ Holste's orders, of course, could be based on information received from his friends and correspondents, or on his own reading. As indicated above, they could also result from his perusal of the catalogues forwarded to him by Combi and La Noue or from other information they gave him; he might receive printed catalogues, but also handwritten lists describing the firm's own wares, which were then headed "nota di quello che è venuto ancora di Germania", or "fattura de'libri quali aspettiamo di Francia" or even "libri novi venuti da Francfort fiero autumnale".⁸⁰

In these lists, some titles might have a marginal comment: "questo credo saria buono per Vostra Signoria Illustrissima"⁸¹—i.e. Holste will appreciate these—and they might end with a remark like "il restante sono libri quali non fanno per V.S.a.Ill.ma"—Holste will not like these. Obviously, the firm thought it knew the preferences of both Holste and his masters and, judging the titles which Holste underlined for ordering, they were often right in thinking so,⁸² although equally often Holste ordered considerably more.

After Holste's orders had reached Venice, they were either executed on the basis of the firm's own stock or placed with the appropriate, mostly non-Italian, Northern European contacts, or saved till the moment La Noue would depart for Frankfurt himself. The waiting had started, but the firm would keep Holste informed about any progress, especially if it took long, as when such structural or periodical inconveniences as piracy on the Mediterranean or the second Anglo-Dutch War imperilled the ships sailing from Paris or Amsterdam, and their costly cargoes.⁸³

Once books had arrived in Venice, they first had to be cleared at the customs office, which, of course, involved some money.⁸⁴ Other problems might arise, however, especially in the case of non-Italian books, which tended to be of special interest to the members of that complex institution, the Venetian Inquisition.⁸⁵ From 1652 onwards, the

⁷⁹ E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 36^r, 5 April 1653.

⁸⁰ The lists are in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 151^r–180^r.

⁸¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 151^r, undated.

⁸² E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 151^r, undated.

⁸³ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 22, 45.: the ship *Sta. Catherina*, carrying Hfl 2000,- worth of books, is six months late because of the ongoing war: 59^r, 107^{r-v}.

⁸⁴ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 66^r.

⁸⁵ We need to know more about the working of the Roman and the Venetian Inqui-

gentlemen were more than usually inquisitive. The Venetian member was concerned about books that would have been considered Venetian property under the non-existing international copyright, but were often reprinted elsewhere and imported into the domain of the *Serenissima*,⁸⁶ which enraged Venetian publishers. The papal member often was more distrustful of the contents of the ‘ultramontane’ books. Sometimes Holste, who was well aware of the problem as the papal Inquisition in Rome was severe, too, apparently decided to intervene and write to the Venetian Inquisition—to the obvious though discreetly voiced dismay of Combi-La Noue. They asked him to refrain from action as this might only cause further problems in the future, since the *Serenissima* was very jealous of its own authority, especially vis à vis papal interference.⁸⁷

The problem was, of course, that one must assume Holste, like so many contemporary Italian intellectuals, to have been specifically interested precisely in the books forbidden by the Inquisition. To him and his kind, the Index must have served as an open invitation-cum-catalogue. This may explain the number of manuscript catalogues he compiled of books forbidden by the Holy Office, and the reasons why; it is a revealing list for Holste also notes that many books banned by the Inquisition are for sale after all, and, also, that many which are not for sale should be, the only reason for their forbidden status not being their heterodox content but the assumed heretic leanings of their author or even of the printer.⁸⁸ If only because, through their Northern-European contacts, they could supply such forbidden books, a firm such as Combi-La Noue was a precious connection for such men as Holste and his patrons, as it was for the grandducal librarian Antonio Magliabecchi, another intellectual well-served by the firm.

After clearance in Venice, the books were prepared for transport to Rome, which meant they had to be packed and put through customs again. Mostly, they were sent by ship to the harbour of Pesaro, on the Adriatic seaboard of the Papal States, where they were received by one Caspar de Meere, who must have been a merchant of Flemish

sition in this field, along the lines of Paul Grendler’s admirable study *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540–1605* (Princeton 1977), although interesting information also can be gained from the introduction to Br. Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550–1670* (London 1983).

⁸⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 22^r, 58^{r-v}.

⁸⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 63^r, 64^r.

⁸⁸ The catalogue is in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3131.

origin residing in that port, and the obvious contact of the Dutch-born La Noue.⁸⁹ From Pesaro, the books were taken overland to Rome by the transport firm of Giovanni Casoni, who delivered them to Holste. Every now and then a smaller packet destined for Holste was included in larger consignments meant for Roman booksellers.⁹⁰ It also happened that a special parcel was made, such as the one containing Lieuwe van Aitzema's rightly famous Dutch 'History of the Peace of Westphalia', "per essere carta grande"—being a large paper copy.⁹¹ Both Holste and his papal patrons, being highly sensitive to political-religious developments in the German lands, must have found this book, on the peace that had finally legitimized the Reformation states, particularly interesting.

Between the dispatch of the books and their arrival in Rome, a period of seven or eight weeks might easily elapse.⁹² And having waited impatiently for such a long time, Holste could sometimes not even just collect his new possessions, especially if the Inquisition decided to intervene in Rome, too. Thus we are intrigued as to the nature of the *libelli* Holste ordered from Germany and which Combi-La Noue procured for him without ever inquiring into their real character. When they were judged *cattivi*—'evil booklets'—by the Roman Inquisitors, the companions asked Holste to send them back to Venice, though disclaiming any fault on their part, the more so as the Venetian Inquisitors had found nothing amiss; they advised him to return some other problematical works, on alchemy and the cabbala, as well.⁹³

Incidentally, nor was the reading of books the only problem. Getting one's scholarly products printed in Rome was not an easy matter either, as Holste told Mersenne, "à raison de l'ignorance et opiniastreté des censeurs inquisiteurs".⁹⁴

Of course, censorship was not confined to the Roman and Venetian Inquisition. In 1654, a book was published, paid for by the provincial Estates of the county of Holland, in the Dutch Republic. Copies arrived at the shop of Combi and La Noue in Venice, but a letter from

⁸⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 33^r, 60^r, 67^r, 96^r, 109^f, 110^{r-v}.

⁹⁰ E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 73^r.

⁹¹ For this: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 98^r, February 20, 1655.

⁹² E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 98^{r-v}; 110^{r-v}.

⁹³ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 106^{r-v}, May 8, 1655.

⁹⁴ Tannery and De Waard, *o.c.*, Vol. XIII, 318, Mersenne to Boulliau, January 1, 1645.

the Leyden orientalist Jacobus Golius followed them, saying they must not be sold: the States of Holland had forbidden it. However, Holste had already got hold of one, though on the strict proviso that the transaction would remain secret. When he ordered a second copy and, in 1655, even a third one, the partners took fright and beseeched him to keep the utmost secrecy, or a commercial, diplomatic and political scandal would be the outcome. Although the title of this apparently controversial publication is never mentioned, I would like to suggest that it was probably Golius's Greek translation of the Protestant version of Holy Scripture, which, in Venetian eyes, would have been a 'hot item' indeed.⁹⁵ It would certainly explain Holste's buying no less than three copies. For of course, a Greek translation of the Protestant Bible was a major instrument of printed propaganda in the continuous battle between Rome and the Reformation for the souls of the Eastern Christians, a battle in which Holste, as a member of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, was engaged as well.

After the receipt of the books, Holste had to effectuate his payments, normally by way of a bill of change, which usually seems to have been taken by the Casoni Firm, apparently acting as banker as well. The bills were always made out in Dutch guilders, counting for 3 Roman *scudi* each—a rate of exchange which was established between La Noue and Holste at an early moment during their business relationship; though it already represented a loss of five per cent in 1652, which must have increased over the following decade, strangely, it was never altered.⁹⁶ Under their agreement, Holste's account was allowed to show a deficit of Hfl 60,- for a period of two weeks.⁹⁷ It was not often that Holste remained in debt, but if he did, the firm, ever correct, informed him of it immediately, though couching their reminder in courteous terms and assuring him that "il commodo di V.S.a Ill.ma è sempre il nostro"⁹⁸—if you are satisfied, we are.

Before the newly arrived books could be displayed in the library of their destination—the beautiful, sculpted room of the *Biblioteca Bar-*

⁹⁵ On this episode: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 88^{r-v}, 89^r, 106^r, 107^r, all letters dating from the period between November 14, 1654 and June 8, 1655.

⁹⁶ The agreement: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 23^r, 20 July 1652; f. 85^r, a letter of change, signed by Casoni; cfr. f. 138^r, February 12, 1660: 'as always has been the practice between us'.

⁹⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 25^r, 37^r, et cetera.

⁹⁸ E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 89^r; 106^{r-v}.

beriniana that now has been transferred to the Vatican Library, or the *Alessandrina*-room in the Sapienza Palace, or, of course, the oldest of the three, the great Sistine hall of the Vatican Library itself—the single volumes had to be bound. Holste used the services of Gregorio Andreoli, a Roman bookseller who dealt with him, too, but who, belonging to a dynasty of bookbinders, held for life the concession to bind the books of the *Vaticana*. His accounts have survived amongst Holste's papers.⁹⁹ They show what prices he charged for binding a single volume: for a duodecimo, 10 *baiocchi* had to be paid; for an octavo, between 10 and 15; for a quarto between 20 and 25, and for a folio volume anything between 40 and 100 *baiocchi*, or 1 *scudo*.

The books ordered and bought via the firm of Combi-La Noue had reached their destination. In bindings proudly proclaiming their ownership: the Barberini coat-of-arms with the ubiquitous three bees, or the heraldic devices of the successive popes under whom Holste served in the Vatican Library—the Pamphilij dove, or the Chigi mountainscum-star—, they would now adorn the great halls designed to be the receptacles of knowledge, where Divine Wisdom would inspire Mankind.

From the very beginning, Combi and La Noue recognized Holste for what he evidently was: the influential representative of one and, after 1653, even of two great libraries in one of the centres of European culture, as well as a collector in his own right. He was also, of course, a well-known scholar whose expertise both in the field of librarianship and in matters of learning in general made him a much sought-after adviser to other scholars—who might be potential buyers of the Venetian firm, which therefore considered their Roman client well worth pampering a little.

Thus we find the companions throwing out the proverbial sprat clearly with a view to catching a whale. They continually try to impress their Roman customer with the fact that a lot of titles, though also for sale in the *Urbs*, are offered at considerably lower prices by their own firm. They even promise that whatever the price quoted in Rome, theirs will always be one *scudo* below. For a number of titles, they are willing to offer considerable discounts, up to 20 or 30 percent.¹⁰⁰ Of course, they also pointed out that their international contacts gave them a real advantage over most Italian firms which concentrated on

⁹⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 185^r, 204^{r-v}, 206, 207, 208^r.

¹⁰⁰ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 15^r, January 25, 1652. Cf. also f. 64^r, January 17, 1653.

the domestic market only. Besides La Noue's visits to the spring and autumn fairs at Frankfurt, over the years the firm also came to have contacts in Amsterdam, Basle, Geneva, Paris and Trier.¹⁰¹ In Antwerp and Cologne, too, men were acting as their agents, spotting new titles or receiving and executing specific orders.¹⁰² Thus, as early as the summer of 1652, the companions could express their hope to be well stocked in foreign books within the year.¹⁰³

Undoubtedly, service must have improved even more when, in 1654, Andries Fries joined the firm of Combi-La Noue,¹⁰⁴ who had already been helping his half-brother with orders placed in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁵

Andries had been a student at Leyden University from 1650 onwards, taking a degree in law. According to my sources, in the 1660s and 1670s he turned out to be something of a scholar-publisher as well, editing a number of literary works both in Amsterdam and in Antwerp. He even published a new edition of *Hieronymi Mercurialis Foroliviensi "De Arte Gymnastica"*, dated Venice 1672, almost certainly in collaboration with his half-brother. In these years, too, his contacts with the Moretus-family, the kings of Antwerp publishing, and with the Frankfurt book trade are documented by the Dutch sources. From 1670 to his death in 1675, he was a partner in the publishing house of J.J. Schippers, which was then directed by Schipper's widow, Susanna Veselaer: in 1672 she named her companion co-heir of her possessions and owner of the firm, but as it turned out she outlived him.

When Fries first came to Italy, he was a 24-year-old, inexperienced young man, on the brink of a career that, as we know now, was largely made through his acting as the Northern-European representative of the house of Combi and La Noue. Whether he was totally unprepared or had already acted as an intermediary when Combi and La Noue

¹⁰¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 19^r, June 8, 1652.

¹⁰² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 22^r, June 22, 1652.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁴ As to the date of Andries' joining the firm, I disagree with: A. Mirto, 'Lettere di Andries Fries ad Antonio Magliabechi, 1659–1675', in: *LIAS*, XIV (1987), 61–100, who gives 1657.

¹⁰⁵ I have reconstructed Fries's career on the basis of H.F. Brown, *o.c.*; the rather disparate—sometimes mistaken—data given by Van Eeghen, *o.c.*, Vol. IV, 116–117, and the article on him in the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, Vol. II, cols. 458–459, combining these with the data from the correspondence: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 88^r, 97^r, 98^r, 107^{r-v}, 116^{r-v}; f. 17^r for an early (1652) reference to Andries's involvement in his half-brother's business affairs.

employed the Leyden printer S. Matthijsz for their edition of Torquato Tasso's *Il Goffredo*, which they then published in Amsterdam in 1652, we do not know.

In November 1654, we find Fries in Venice, for business consultations with the companions; he also visited Rome—where Holste graciously deigned to receive him. In the following years, Fries not only acted as his half-brother's agent in the Dutch Republic, selling Italian books, there, but also seems to have taken care of most of the firm's acquisitions in the Dutch Republic, the Southern Netherlands, Germany and France, although his journeys might be hindered by such things as wars—but then the partners would hasten to assure Holste that “si la pace tra Hollandesi et Inglesi si fa, subito andarà un di noi in Hollanda et Germania per far negotio”¹⁰⁶: peace will allow them to resume business with the North again. Occasionally, Fries also travelled the Italian peninsula to explore new markets for books to be sold by Combi/La Noue.¹⁰⁷

By using their contacts and offering this kind of service, Combi and La Noue could ask and expect Holste to recommend them to his friends, especially those who were about to start a collection of their own.¹⁰⁸ Holste did not disappoint them.

Thus, the well-known scholar Carlo Dati—the author of a life of the ‘Ancient Painters’, who had profited from Holste's deep knowledge of the Classics—became one of their customers, as did the archbishop of Citta Nuova mentioned above.¹⁰⁹ Sometimes, the companions felt free to employ a little stratagem, sending Holste several titles suggestively “per mostra”, ‘on sight’, only, or, another ruse, several copies of one book which, as they wrote, might interest both him and his friends. Thus, in December 1653 Holste received six unasked-for copies of J. Glasius's *Philologia*, which had been forwarded to him with the courteously commercial argument ‘that they are better for Your Lordship and his friends than for the people over here’, i.e. in Venice.¹¹⁰ Every now and then the stratagem worked and the companions were

¹⁰⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 66^r, March 14. For Andries's selling of Italian books: Van Eeghen, *o.c.*, Vol. IV, 117.

¹⁰⁷ Mirto, *o.c.*, 62.

¹⁰⁸ E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 87^r, October 25, 1654.

¹⁰⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 19^r, June 8, 1652; *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, f. 166^r, September 16, 1657, Luca Torregiani to Holste.

¹¹⁰ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 59^r, December 6, 1653.

the better for it. If, however, Holste was not tempted, the firm correctly suggested he credit his account with the price of the books sent.¹¹¹

One must conclude from the letters that the firm always acted correctly. If a book ordered by Holste did not arrive in Rome, a letter immediately followed, again crediting him for the amount due.¹¹² However, when, once, Holste failed to provide an accurate description of a title he wanted and then did not accept the book that finally arrived, the companions firmly suggested that he find a Roman friend willing to buy it in his stead.¹¹³

As indicated above, Holste did not disappoint his Venetian booksellers, bringing them both individual and, far more important, institutional customers. Going through the letters sent by Combi-La Noue one cannot suppress a smile upon reading the fervent congratulations with which the companions greeted Holste's nomination to the custodianship of the Vatican Library. Nor were they wrong in assuming this would markedly increase their business dealings with him: almost immediately, the new keeper started ordering books for the *Vaticana* through his Venetian friends¹¹⁴—after an experienced minor official of the library had explained to him what was the proper administrative way.¹¹⁵

Citizens of the Republic of Letters

Even from the early letters it is clear that the relationship between Holste and the Venetian company, or rather its Dutch partner, was not going to be a purely business one, only—although it has to be borne in mind that a number of services rendered in other fields did, of course, cement the firm's position as one of Holste's main book suppliers.

In 1652, Holste asked the partners to be of assistance to a high-born German—the Duke of Mecklenburg—and his secretary, who would be visiting Venice on their trip through Italy; this kind of service was to be a recurrent theme in the correspondence. Other Ger-

¹¹¹ E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 21^r, 54^r, 86^{r-v}, 110^v, et cetera.

¹¹² E.g. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 99^r, March 6. 1655.

¹¹³ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 76^r, May 9, 1654.

¹¹⁴ The congratulations: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 48^r, September 6, 1653; notes about orders: ff. 51^r, 87^r, 90^v, 93^v, 105^v, 108^r, 160^{r-v}, 162^v, 163^v.

¹¹⁵ A little note in *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 162^v seems to represent the official's advice to Holste.

mans, too, amongst whom one who had been a friend of Holste's in the Low Countries, were received and helped by the firm's directors and assistants.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, Dutchmen or Flemings, looking for employment in Italy and asking their compatriot La Noue for help, were given letters of recommendation for Holste. There was one who said he was an experienced bookbinder; upon arrival in Rome he was actually taken into Holste's service, but quickly found to be of no assistance at all. The partners were deeply repentant for having recommended such an unworthy person, but found a very tactful wording for it: 'whenever they plan to render a service to Holste again, they will be even more circumspect'.¹¹⁷

The firm or rather, again, its Dutch partner, also acted as a news-agent. For although, of course, the Roman Curia was the centre of a wide, formally organized net of correspondents, whose *avvisi*, or newsletters, reached it from all over Europe, information supplied by well-connected individuals was always considered a valuable addition, especially by men like Holste, who acted as political advisers as well.¹¹⁸ La Noue, with his contacts in the politically important Dutch Republic, could and did write to Holste about the vicissitudes in the North. When the Anglo-Dutch commercial and political difficulties resulted in war, Holste was told that "il nostro amiraglio Tromp ha ordine di combattere"; La Noue was afraid that a long and bloody struggle would be inevitable, for at stake was who 'will be Master of the Seas'.¹¹⁹ Holste was interested indeed, and repeatedly asked to be kept abreast of further developments.¹²⁰

That assistance could be mutual is shown by the Kircher-affair. The German-born Jesuit Father Athanasius Kircher (1601–1689), by 1655 a famous erudite, had been first recommended to Cardinal Barberini, Holste's patron, by Holste's friend Peiresc.¹²¹ From the 1630s onwards Holste himself had done everything to further the learned Father's scholarly career, trying to shield him from such tasks as were not suited to his bent of mind—e.g. being appointed spiritual adviser to the erratic

¹¹⁶ For this: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 25^r, 13 September 1652; f. 49^r, September 27, 1653.

¹¹⁷ This affair: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 74^r, 86^r v.

¹¹⁸ On the system of *avvisi* see: J. Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale de Rome*, Vol. I (Paris 1957), chapter I. We do know about Holste's political role: K. Repgen, 'Lucas Holste als politischer Gutachter in Rom', a.c.

¹¹⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, f. 22^r.

¹²⁰ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, ff. 25^r, 66^r.

¹²¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, f. 60^r, Peiresc to Barberini, September 10, 1633.

Prince Frederick of Hesse, while, according to Holste, he rather should be enabled to travel to the Near East to pursue his studies. Holste felt that Kircher, especially after publishing his epochal *Prodromus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus* (Rome 1636) should visit the sites of his research.¹²² In 1655, Kircher was looking for a bookseller with international contacts to distribute some of his books, and the firm of Combi and La Noue was interested indeed. With Holste acting as an intermediary, contact was established, but due to the opposition of the reverend father's *commilitones* in Christ no contract was signed for several months, and when an agreement was finally reached in August, the terms seem to have been dictated more by the Society of Jesus than by the signatories themselves. Nevertheless, business was done, to mutual satisfaction, with Holste now acting as a banker receiving the bills of exchange endorsed by Kircher and transferring them to Casoni.¹²³

An interesting episode is the one which started in spring 1655, when a nephew of Holste's, by the name of Lambeck, who had been staying with him, first appears in the letters of the Venetian booksellers. The young man in question was on the brink of leaving Rome for Leyden, to study at the university. Holste asked La Noue for the proper procedure and, more specifically, for the best way of selecting lodgings. La Noue explained that it was advisable to rent a room, arguing against a students' lodging-house on the grounds that living with a group would always distract a serious-minded young man from his scholarly purposes; besides, such a place would charge some 150 rixdollars, whereas the rent of a room would be about a 100 rixdollars, leaving one free to choose where to go for dinner and what to eat. Both La Noue's friend 'Giovanni Mayre'—surely the Leyden bookseller John Maire, of a well-known family of book traders operating in the first half of the 17th-century¹²⁴—and Andries Fries would be helping the young man whenever necessary.¹²⁵

¹²² BAV, BL, Vol. 6488, f. 39^r, Holste to Barberini, September 7, 1637: Kircher is far too timid, too respectful, too unpractical, too unworldly to cope with the unruly convert. He is a scholar, and should be given the chance to go to Egypt and the Levant, to explore the country and learn the languages. On Kircher's research for his publication of the *Prodromus* see: Tamizey, *o.c.*, Vol. II, 108. Bouchard to Peiresc, February 11, 1634.

¹²³ BAV, BL, Vol. 6484, fols. 100^r, 110^{v-r}, 117^r, 118^r, between April 3, and August 28, 1655.

¹²⁴ J.A. Gruys, C. de Wolf, *Typographi et Bibliopolae Neerlandici usque ad annum MDCC*, *Thesaurus* (Nieuwkoop 1980), 139–144.

¹²⁵ BAV, BL, Vol. 6484, fols. 98^{r-v}, February 20, 1655.

At first I thought that with this letter I had discovered some unknown detail about the life of the famous Peter Lambeck (1628–1680). He was the son of Holste's sister and her husband Heino Lambeck, schoolmaster of Hamburg's St. James School.¹²⁶ Born in 1628, he quickly became his uncle's favourite, travelling, in 1646, first to the Netherlands, where he read geography in Amsterdam and law in Leyden and befriended such scholars as G.J. Vossius and J.F. Gronovius; he then went on to Paris, where he was received by Francesco Barberini, during his short exile, there, after the death of Urban VIII. He also came to know such friends of Holste's as Gabriel Naudé and the Du Puy-brothers. He lived in Rome with his uncle for about two years before returning to Hamburg, by the same route. In 1652, he was appointed professor of history at the university. Ten years later, one year after his uncle's death, he resigned his post, and on the instigation of Christina of Sweden converted to Catholicism, to which he had been attracted since his stay in Rome in 1647. Travelling to Rome once again, he finally ended up in Vienna, as vice-librarian of the Imperial Library and official historian to the emperor.

However, as appears from the dates, it cannot have been this learned Lambeck nephew whom we encounter in La Noue's letters.¹²⁷ Obviously, a younger Lambeck, too, had travelled to Italy, and in the summer of 1655 left Rome for Leyden. Henceforth, his letters from the Republic reached Uncle Holste via Maire-La Noue. In 1658 he was back in Italy. The 'German Nation' in Venice—the powerful association of merchants from North-Western Europe centred around the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* on the *Canal Grande*—had asked him to become their syndic, or spokesman. La Noue gravely advised against his accepting the offer without Holste's approbation, since a Dutch friend of his had held it once, only to find it involved great expenditure at the cost of one's private means and left no time at all for study and scholarship. Holste's nephew did stay on in Italy, however, for we find a Lucas Lambeck taking care of Holste's financial affairs between 1658 and 1660, endorsing payments to, amongst others, the firm of Combi and La Noue.¹²⁸ We may conclude that he was probably Peter

¹²⁶ All data from: N. Wilckens, *Leben Petri Lambeckii* (Hamburg 1724), 1–180. I have been unable to find: W. Friedensberg, 'Lukas Holstenius und die Familie Lambeck', in: *Der Hamburgischer Correspondent* (n.d., n. pl.)

¹²⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, fols. 110^{r-v}, 116^{r-v}, 119^r.

¹²⁸ See the accounts in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, fols. 144^v–145^r.

Lambeck's younger brother. What became of him after his uncle died in 1661 is not known.

With Holste's death, we also lose track of the further vicissitudes of the firm of Combi and La Noue. Some disconnected data are known, though. Obviously, the firm continued to prosper. Perhaps Sebastiano Combi died in the 1660s, for in those years his Dutch partner alone was honourably referred to as "eruditorum omnium fautori eximio et bibliopolae apud Venetos non postremo". In 1675, Giovanni was heir to part of his half-brother's estate, inheriting quite a number of books, which he then put up for sale, naming the Amsterdam publisher Hendrik Wetstein as his representative. His sister Clasina de la Noué and her Schilperoot children were Andries Fries's general heirs.¹²⁹ The firm of Combi and La Noue was still in business after 1686, when the Dutch booktrader Marc Huguetan was in debt to them.¹³⁰

Conclusion

In Lucas Holste, Baroque Rome lost one of its most visible men: a notable scholar, an influential librarian and an important book collector. Various testimonies to his cultural significance remained. His funerary monument, paid for by Cardinal Barberini, is adorned by a now rather worn *paean* praising his many talents, composed by his heir, Dr. Peter Lambeck of Hamburg.¹³¹ Another line perhaps better suggests Holste's importance. The phrase "la cupidigia d'haver molti libri è una infermità che si porta seco sino all'ultimo periodo"—coveting the possession of many books is an illness that stays with one till the end of one's life—was uttered by Lucas Holste according to one of his learned and bibliophile correspondents, Luca Torreggiani, archbishop of Ravenna, who sought his friend's advice when he planned to create a library of his own.¹³²

The world should consider itself lucky not only for Holste's activities as a collector, but also for the way in which he bequeathed the

¹²⁹ Van Eeghen, *o.c.*, Vol. IV, 117.

¹³⁰ Van Eeghen, *o.c.*, Vol. III (Amsterdam 1965), 169. Also H.F. Brown, *o.c.*

¹³¹ A transcription is in: *BAV, Manoscritti Chigiani*, Vol. II 1058, f. 115. Bignami-Odier, *o.c.*, cites another epitaph, in *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2182, f. 49^r, probably composed by Cardinal Barberini himself. Lambeck's published version of the epitaph: P. Lambeck, *Epitaphium v.c. Lucae Holstii Romae in ecclesia Germanorum cognominata Animae* (Vienna 1663).

¹³² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6494, f. 166^r, Torreggiani to Holste, September 16, 1657.

various parts of his library. An important part of the printed books went to the Roman *Biblioteca Angelica*, one of the town's first public libraries, attached to the great Augustinian monastery, with the former owner's express wish that they be made available to any serious reader; the very fact of this bequest probably shows Holste's continued disgust with the Vatican Library's malfunctioning as the greatest repository of learning in the Christian world. Perhaps not incidentally, the *Angelica* also was the library that held some of the earliest neo-Platonist texts, those belonging to the 15th-century Augustinian friar, Cardinal Aegidius of Viterbo—Holste may well have studied them at an earlier stage of his life. At the *Angelica*, Holste's books, many of them annotated by him, now remain. They are, amongst other things, a monument to many decades of trans-Alpine book collecting and, thus, to trans-Alpine cultural communication with and influence on the world of Rome. Holste's paternal library, and a number of manuscript texts were donated to the recently-established public library of his home town, Hamburg. These mainly consisted of theological and philosophical treatises, amongst which Ficino's edition of Plato.¹³³

However, besides some minor legacies to Pope Alexander VII, to his nephew Cardinal Flavio Chigi, and to Queen Christina of Sweden, the bulk of Holste's manuscripts were left to his old patron, Cardinal Barberini.¹³⁴ In a letter which showed real emotion—a rare trait in this man who from childhood had learned to master and mask his feelings—Barberini movingly described the splendid funeral of his old collaborator and went on to praise his friendship, his great merits in general and his inestimable help in the study and publication of significant texts in particular.¹³⁵

Barberini preserved Holste's manuscript heritage in his own library. There it can still be studied, a fitting testimony to the working life of a great European scholar, a worthy member of the *Republic of Letters*, but also a major actor in the complex play of papal cultural policy. They represent a challenge: only if these texts, both the thousands of letters and the many scholarly manuscripts, are properly studied will the full extent of Holste's cultural importance, and his role in the

¹³³ On the somewhat laborious division of Holste's books and manuscripts one may consult the correspondence between Francesco Barberini and the City Library of Hamburg: *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 2182, fols. 50^r; 51^{r-v}; 53^{r-v}.

¹³⁴ Holste's testament was published in: A.F. Kollar, *Analecta Monumentorum annis aevis Vindobonensia*, I (Vienna 1761), 1191–1195.

¹³⁵ *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 2182, f. 45^r sqq.

papal culture of Rome, ever be revealed. However, as if to illustrate and demonstrate that power was served by books, in 1662 Cardinal Barberini paid for the publication of an important part of Holste's remaining work, viz. the *Collectio romana bipartita veterum aliquot historiae ecclesiasticae monumentorum edi coepta a Luca Holstenio (...) absoluta post ejus obitum, notis ipsius posthumis adjunctis*. It was an act not only of piety but also of political propaganda. Obviously, Cardinal Barberini, though no longer part of the papacy's inner circle, yet seems to have felt that both the cause of historical scholarship and the power of the Church were well served by this edition. The two volumes, together containing almost 600 pages, assembled documents unearthed by Holste in various Roman collections, including the Barberini Library, which always is specifically mentioned. Basically covering the first thousand years of the papacy's history, these texts—imperial letters concerning the Roman see, descriptions of early Christian synods, papal letters to bishops and princes—pertained to questions central to the power of the popes: their historical primacy amongst the bishops of the Christian Churches, and, parallel, their power over the functioning of the entire Church.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IBRAHIM AL-HAKILANI (1605–1664), OR: THE POWER OF SCHOLARSHIP AND PUBLISHING¹

Introduction. Cross-cultural contacts in the Mediterranean

In most studies of the Mediterranean, the battle of Lepanto (1571) marks the end of whatever cultural or other unity the Inner Sea still might have had since the Crusades first divided it into an Islamic and a Christian sphere of influence. The gradual closing of the ranks on both sides, evident since the 10th century, by the end of the 16th century had developed into a virtual military and political standstill, which seemed to preclude any possibility of cultural exchange, the continuity of commercial contacts notwithstanding.

However, I think we are wrong to view the Mediterranean in the 17th and 18th centuries as a region divided into two entirely self-contained cultures. Nevertheless, a general history of cultural life in the Mediterranean during this period remains to be written; but such a project does not seem feasible as long as those who have studied one or more of the numerous minor episodes of Christian-Islamic or, otherwise, European-Near Eastern contacts show little awareness of the basic fact that these very moments are part of a structure and a process of cultural exchange and even interdependence that continued to tie together the shores of this sea.

It seems desirable that historians who study the problem of cross-cultural contacts in the Mediterranean should cast their net wide indeed. If they want fruitfully to treat this topic, they will have to interpret the results of such other scholarly approaches to human reality as, e.g., cultural anthropology and oriental studies. Only by adopting an interdisciplinary and an integralist stance can they hope to discover the manifold examples of the above-mentioned fundamental unity. Ideally,

¹ I gratefully acknowledge my debt to Dr. Monique Bernard, who critically read the manuscript and helped with the transliteration of the Arabic, following the usage of the Encyclopedia of Islam.

a search for the factors that brought about this unity would include a comparative study of popular customs and of religious and social usages. Equally important is an analysis of commercial contacts and their impact, on the one hand, and of the structures of politics and of systems of scholarly patronage on the other. Such topics as piracy and its influence, and, partly connected with it, the role of the so-called renegades arise as well.

Essential is an awareness of the important function of Rome, of the papacy as a constant factor in the political, economic and cultural exchange between (Southern) Europe and, specifically, the Near East. In this context, research into the function of the many intermediate groups like the Greeks and the Jews is necessary, for they played a part in all these fields, from commerce to scholarship, and were seen and used as such by the papacy as well.

Against this general background, it is the specific purpose of this chapter to draw attention to a group of mediators of special interest to historians of the contacts between Christianity and Islam.² I am referring to the Lebanese Maronite community and, more precisely, to those members of it who, from the end of the 16th century onwards, came to Rome and, subsequently, to other capitals of Europe, as, for example, Paris. They have significantly contributed to the growth of oriental studies and thus to an ongoing European-Near Eastern debate during the following two hundred years. Also, however, the Maronites exemplify the continuous tensions between the two dominant cultures of the Mediterranean, the Christian-European and the Islamic-Near Eastern.

To illustrate the Maronites' role, specifically within the context of papal cultural policy in the 17th century, I will concentrate on an important early representative of this group, a man called Ibrahim al-Hakilani, that is from the Lebanese village of Hakil, who styled himself Abraham Echhellense when he lived in Europe.

² For references to Arabic texts, I have used C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur* (= *GAL*), (Weimar 1898–1902), and supplement volumes, (Leiden 1937–1940). Other data are from G. Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, (Città del Vaticano 1944–1953), Vols. I–V, and M. Steinschneider, *Die europäischen Uebersetzungen aus dem Arabischen bis Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1904–1905), Vols. I–II. I have also consulted: W. Strothmann, *Die Anfänge der Syrischen Studien in Europa* (Wiesbaden 1971); J. Fuck, *Die Arabischen Studien in Europa bis in dem Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig 1955) as well as: C. Aboussonan, (ed.), *Le Livre et le Liban jusqu'à 1900* (Paris 1982).

The significance of Ecchellense has been noted before,³ and some elements for a reconstruction of his life and works have been available for some time, but no effort has been made to assemble these data, to enquire into the nature of Ecchellen's work and to integrate it all into a proper biographical sketch and, in doing so, correct a great amount of minor and major mistakes. A lucky find of some manuscripts included an extensive (auto-)biographical note, apparently supplied by Ecchellen himself to Carlo Cartari, a Roman patrician and the self-appointed chronicler of the Roman university. This provided me with an opportunity to systematize and synthesize the existing data about the career of this learned Maronite. Far more important, however, in interpreting Ecchellen's life and works against the background of 17th-century papal culture and propaganda policy, I can now try to illumine some of the problems of cross-cultural Mediterranean contacts and, specifically, the significance, within that process, of Rome's need to use the expert knowledge of the Maronites about the roots of the Church in the East for its efforts at religious reintegration and at strengthening its position in the West.⁴

The Maronites in history

Most readers will have some use of a few introductory remarks about the Maronites, a fascinating group that, from a religious community, developed into a nation with a definite culture of its own that has since become an integral part of the Lebanon.⁵

³ Most of the available information to date has been meticulously, though unsystematically gathered in a number of footnotes to: G. Levi della Vida, *Ricerche sulla Formazione del più antico fondo dei manoscritti orientali della Biblioteca Vaticana* (Città del Vaticano 1939) especially 6, note 2 and in Graf, *o.c.*, III, 354–359.

⁴ Archivio di Stato di Roma (= *ASR*), Fondo Cartari-Febei (= *FCF*), Vol. 64, ff. 23^r–27^r and 69^r–81^v.

⁵ I have used: A.S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (Londen 1968) part VI, the Maronite Church, 391sq. Older, Maronite historians, though offering valuable information, tend to be very apologetic; cfr. Stephan al-Dawayhi (1630–1704), *Tarikh al-ta'ifa al-maruniyya* (Beirut 1890) and Michel A. Gabriel, *Tarikh al-kanisa al-Antakiya al-suraniya* (Beirut 1900–1904). A rather slight study is: P. Carali, *Les Maronites au Liban* (Jounieh 1949). The most recent monograph to date, M. Moose, *The Maronites in History* (Syracuse 1986), is largely a rehash of older works and unnecessarily unsympathetic. More informative is: R.M. Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society* (Princeton 1970). A decent survey of Maronite historiography gives: K.S. Salibi, *Maronite Historians of Medieval Lebanon* (Beirut 1959).

Reputedly, the rather legendary St. Maro(n) (350–433), a monophysite Christian monk, founded the monastery around which the community originated, in the Syrian valley of the Orontes, near Antioch. In the 6th century, the greater part of the group was slaughtered in an attack by Jacobite-Syrian Christians, a fact not normally mentioned in Maronite historiography, which likes to stress the unbroken continuity of their community from its beginnings to the present day.

Following the Arab invasions of the seventh century, the Maronite patriarch of Antioch fled to Byzantium. The remainder of the Maronites, who had migrated to North Lebanon, then chose to elect their own pontiff. One of his successors was St. John Maron who ruled from 685 to 707 and gave his name to the group. Again, the Maronite historical tradition has tried to rewrite the past, telling that the saint led his followers into safety from persecution by Islamic Arab conquerors or by Islamicised countrymen. Nowadays, the view is that the Maronites, Christianised tribes of the Lebanese region, fled the valley of the Orontes at the end of the 9th century before the onslaught of the Byzantine armies and hid in the mountains till, in later times, they spread again.

It is not easy to decide what is true and false in these various interpretations of early Lebanese history, precisely because they still play such a major part in the present-day politics of the country. According to many Muslims, the Christian Maronites, whose number probably amounts to 25 per cent of the Lebanese population, have an inordinate hold over the cultural and political life of the nation. To counter this criticism, which actually dates from the last century already, the Maronites continue to strive to create a non-Arab, Christian past for themselves that would make them the original masters of Lebanon, the founding fathers of the present state. The Islamic Arabs, of course, try to play down this tradition.⁶

However this may be, settling down in the mountain recesses of the Lebanon the medieval Maronites became, more than ever, a society of warrior-farmers, feudally organized, living in small villages around the patriarch's see in the Kadisha valley. They became known as the 'Ahl al-Djabal', the 'people of the mountains'. Isolated from contacts with the Churches of Byzantium and Rome, the Maronites did not

⁶ On the general history of Lebanon see: P.K. Hitti, *Lebanon in History* (London 1957) and K.S. Salibi, *A house of many mansions. The History of Lebanon reconsidered* (Leiden 1988).

betray what they, in another attempt to create a millennial tradition, considered their Phoenician background: they engaged in trade all over the Eastern Mediterranean, established small communities as far as Cyprus and Baghdad, and also entered the new, Islamic rulers' bureaucracy, serving as administrators to the caliphs in Damascus and, again, Baghdad.

With the advance of the Crusaders, however, it became clear that the Maronites had not assimilated at all: they quickly joined the European invaders and became invaluable scouts and spies, knowing the lay of the land as well as they did. Inter-marriage with the 'Franks' produced the 'Pullani'-society, in which Eastern and Western influences mingled.⁷

Contacts with the West inevitably meant contacts with Rome and the papacy. A Romanization of the Maronite church took place and in 1182, the community formally abjured monophysitism, a belief they had held ever since the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451). Rome was not tardy in using this chance to extend its authority, even though the end of the Crusader kingdoms heralded the end of direct influence from Europe. The papacy continued to send out missionaries: first Dominicans and Franciscans, then, in the 16th century, members of the newly-founded Society of Jesus, and finally, in the 17th century, Capuchins. None of them could avoid the sometimes serious clashes with the local population who did not easily give up their spiritual and cultural independence.⁸

Though Maronite patriarchs attended the great western Church councils of the 15th and 16th centuries,⁹ Rome almost certainly did not realize that its policy of Romanization was not only superficial, being restricted to the Maronite (ecclesiastical) elite, but also incomplete, as western, Latin traditions were only partially accepted in Maronite liturgy and theology. The actual reunion of the Maronite with the Roman church, promulgated at a synod in 1736, introduced the papal name in their so-called Syrian liturgy and established the separation of men and women in monasteries; other minor changes were accepted as well. Before and after this event, the Maronites had gone to great

⁷ T. Anaissi (ed.), *Collectio Documentorum Maronitarum* (Livorno 1921), 91.

⁸ For these centuries, the contacts between the Maronites and Rome are documented in: A. Rabbath (ed.), *Documents pour servir à l'histoire du Christianisme en Orient* (Paris-Leipzig 1905-1910).

⁹ Anaissi, *o.c.*, 113-114.

lengths to establish their original, Latin orthodoxy and their adherence to Rome, an effort that has discoloured much of their otherwise valuable historical scholarship.¹⁰

The first great mission pope of the Catholic Reform period, Gregory XIII (1572–1585), wishing to bring the Maronites into closer contact with the Roman fold, not only increased the number of missionaries sent to the Lebanon,¹¹ he also established the Maronite College in Rome, to train young men from this community in the Roman obedience.¹² Great though the influence of this college and its alumni may have been, in the end it did not effectuate more than a constant, but theoretical reaffirmation of Rome's supremacy by a group who still maintained their religious and socio-cultural individuality and independence. Such fundamental things as the election of priests by the local community, the non-enforcement of celibacy in the lower echelons of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the use of Arabic as the language of prayer and of the reading of Scripture, and of Syriac-Aramaic for the liturgy, as well as the fact that the election of the Maronite patriarch only was formally ratified by Rome all remained unchanged, up till the present day.

Ecchellen's youth: 1605–1619

Abraham Ecchellense, as he is generally known, was born Ibrahim al-Hakilani on the slopes of the Lebanon, on February 15, 1605.¹³ His father was one "Giovanni Abraham", a petty nobleman from an ancient family of warriors, as Abraham told his Roman biographer. His mother Mary was from the Schipani-family, formerly rulers of the town of Djubayl, the old Byblos, between Beirut and Tripoli, on the Syrian coast. Abraham felt the need to add that the city was well-known for its expert seafarers and famous architects—from this region came the stones of Solomon's temple and, we might add, the cedar wood for its ceiling and furnishings. It also was the home of St. Simeon, the

¹⁰ Atiya, *o.c.*, 392; Salibi, *o.c.*, *passim*.

¹¹ Anaissi, *o.c.*, 52sq.; 90; and G. Levi della Vida, *Documenti intorno alle relazioni delle chiese orientali con la Santa Sede durante il pontificato di Gregorio XIII* (Città del Vaticano 1948).

¹² P. Raphael, *Le rôle du Collège maronite romain dans l'orientalisme au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Beirut 1950).

¹³ Unless otherwise indicated, all biographical references are to Ecchellen's (auto-)biographical essay in: ASR, FCF, Vol. 64.

Stylobite. In the enumeration of these details, we can see what historical and social background the Maronites liked to present, linking their community to the tradition of Phoenicia and, of course, ancient Israel, the Holy Land, where Christianity originated.

However, Mary's grandfather had been deposed by the Ottemans, somewhere in the 1520's. Since then, the Schipani led a rather impoverished and imperilled life. As Abraham's father died when the boy was nine years old, his mother soon sent him away to be educated by a relative, who was the abbot of the famous monastery of St. Anthony. Abraham stayed with him for some six years, being taught Syriac, the sacred language of the Maronites and other Near Eastern nations.

In 1619, when Abraham was about fifteen years old, the then Maronite patriarch decided to select some youngsters for further education in the Maronite College in Rome; young Ecchellen was his first choice. Though Mary was rather loth to see her only son leave for Europe, she gave in to the combined pressure of the patriarch and the archpriest of Tripoli. Thus, on November 15, 1619, Abraham and five others sailed from the port of Sayda, ancient Sidon, accompanied by archpriest Abraham Anturini, venerably aged 91, and Giovanni Battista Corti who later joined the Society of Jesus. The small group arrived in Rome on January 8, 1620.

The first Italian period: 1620–1628

For five years, Abraham was a student, studying Italian and Latin, philosophy and theology. During these years, his talents must have become obvious already: he served as corrector of the Maronite *Breviarium*, which was printed in Rome in 1624. In 1625, Father Pietro Metosuta, another Maronite member of the Society of Jesus, died, leaving vacant the chair of Syriac and literary Arabic at the College. Abraham, though young, was asked to fill his position and accepted—eagerly, one may assume.

He immediately started working on a Syriac grammar; it was printed in 1628 by the newly-established Press of the equally new papal Ministry for the Propagation of the Faith, one of the pet projects of Pope Urban VIII. The booklet was almost universally used, even in his own country, Abraham proudly stated—and indeed, we know that as late as 1646 the Unshod Carmelites ordered as many as twelve copies for the missionaries they planned to send to the Near

East.¹⁴ It is, actually, very much a study tool for beginners, short, clearly structured, a soft-cover, small pocket book well suited to daily use.¹⁵ It was dedicated to Cardinal Ottavio Bandini, protector of the Maronites. In the introduction, not surprisingly Ecchellen extols Syriac as one of the most venerable languages of the world: he argued it could only be compared to Latin.

The idea to compose a short introduction to the fundamentals of Syriac, to be used beside the Latin grammar of Georgius Amira—or Umayra (? -1644), a Maronite scholar who lived in Rome from 1584 onwards, before becoming patriarch in 1633—had been sponsored by Francesco Ingoli, the powerful first secretary of the Congregation of the Propaganda. Two of the three readers who perused the book before the *imprimatur* was given, were oriental scholars: Abbot Hilarion Roncati, of the monastery of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, and Sergius Rizzi—Sarkis al-Ruzzi (?-1638)—the Syrian archbishop of Damascus, brother to two and nephew to one Rizzi-patriarch of the Maronite church, who permanently resided in Rome.

Also in 1628, Ecchellen published a *Khulasat al-lugha al-arabiyya*, or ‘Short Introduction to the Arabic Language’.¹⁶ The booklet may well have served a definite demand. For precisely the early decades of the 17th century saw an heightened awareness of the importance of Arabic, both as a language that could help Christians understand their own roots in the Near East and, indeed, as an important language in its own right.

In the mean time, Abraham increased his proficiency in philosophy, crowning his efforts with a promotion at the *Collegio Romano*, the Jesuit college which catered to the Roman and Italian nobility and, in the pontificate of Urban VIII, definitely became a centre of learned education, to the great chagrin of the authorities of Rome’s papal *Sapienza*-university.

On June 15, 1631, the newly created doctor left for Syria, arriving at Sayda on July 25. There, according to his own information, he went to see the man who was by then master of Greater Syria, the *amir* Fakhr al-Din II, Ma’n (1572–1635).¹⁷

¹⁴ BAV, *Manoscritti Borgiani Latini*, Vol. 62, f. 30A.

¹⁵ Abraham(i) Ecchellen(si), *Collegii Maronitarum Alumni Linguae Syriacae sive Chaldaicae Perbrevis Institutio ad eiusdem Nationis Studiosos Adolescentes* (Rome 1628).

¹⁶ Graf, *o.c.*, III, 356.

¹⁷ G. Mariti, *Storia di Faccardino* (Livorno 1787); F. Wüstenfeld, *Fakhr ed-Din der Drusen-*

*Mediterranean interlude—Ecchellen as
diplomat and merchant: 1628–1633*

To understand what other roles young Abraham had played while pursuing his academic studies in Rome, we should stop for a moment and consider the position and politics of Fakhr al-Din II, the grandson of the famous Fakhr al-Din I, from the tribe of the Druzes and from the house that had ruled Lebanon since the 12th century, priding itself on having been the champions of the Crusader kings.¹⁸

On the death of his father, Kurkmaz Ma'n, the second Fakhr was confirmed by the Ottoman government as *sandjak* of his family's fiefs of Beirut and Sayda, as well as acquiring the town of Safad in 1602. He quickly became one of the small group of petty rulers operating almost entirely independent from their nominal Ottoman overlords in Istanbul. However, he set out to increase his power and finally succeeded in defeating his main rival in two battles at Damascus and Hama in 1607.

In his fervour to gain control over Greater Syria and throw off the Ottoman yoke, Fakhr al-Din established diplomatic relations with Grand Duke Ferdinand I of Tuscany.¹⁹ This prince was quite eager to help the Druze *amir*: the prospect of commercial gain for the Florentine maritime interests which free harbours in the Levant would provide, as well as a vision of a new crusade, indeed, of Tasso's recently published great poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1590) come true, must have held enormous attraction. Fakhr al-Din also approached Rome for support, very probably using the Maronite College as an intermediate.

Actually, Fakhr himself had been educated in a Maronite family, members of which later held most of the high positions in his government.²⁰ The favour the *amir* showed the Maronites is, of course, easily explained. Not only could he well use their military might—according to some early 17th-century sources, the Maronite community

furst und seine Zeitgenossen (Göttingen 1886); P. Carali, *Fakhr ad-Din II, principe del Libano e la Corte di Toscana, 1605–1635* (Rome 1936–1938), Vols. I–II, and his: *Le Liban et l'Empire Ottoman au temps de Fakhrédin II al-Ma'ni, 1590–1635* (Heliopolis 1952).

¹⁸ On this group: N.M. Abu-Izzeddin, *The Druzes. A new study of their history, faith and society* (Leiden 1984), and R.Br. Betts, *The Druze* (New Haven 1988).

¹⁹ Carali, *Fakhr, o.c.*, 61. Also: P. Rietbergen, "The Making of a 'Syncretic Saint'", a.c., 215–219.

²⁰ Carali, *Fakhr, o.c.*, 40–41.

contributed some 25,000 men to his forces²¹—he also knew that their contacts with the Church of Rome could be turned to political profit. The idea, however vague, of a new crusade remained dear to the popes up till the end of the century. Long before his pontificate, Urban, too, was fascinated by this vision, as is shown by his own verse²² and by the crusading verse published by his entourage, such as the epic of the man who, later, was to become his court poet, Francesco Bracciolini's-1611 *La Croce racquistata*.²³

In 1613, Fakhr al-Din discovered the Ottoman government had decided to bring his quasi-independent rule to an end. To avoid disaster, he chose to take refuge in Tuscany. This unusual step was a highly published event in the Christian world. However, with the accession, in 1614, of a new grand vizier in Istanbul, Fakhr was allowed to return and his son Ali even was named governor of Southern Lebanon.

In 1615, the *amir* did return, for seven months, but only to bolster up his forces and encourage his people. He then again sailed for Europe, trying to enlist the aid of Spain and of the Knights of St. John, thus preparing a large-scale bid for independence. He finally broke his self-imposed exile in 1618. From then on, his power in Syria constantly grew. As he conquered Tripoli and extended his influence into Palestine, trying towards Jerusalem, he continued his efforts to interest the Mediterranean European powers in a combined attack on the Turks, to liberate the Holy Land. We should not be surprised that actual European support of this great game never materialized; to most rulers, it must have seemed too dangerous, in view of the power the Ottoman government could still wield, as well as because of the Turkish threat of the Eastern parts of Christian Europe.

It seems that young Ecchellen was mixed up in Fakhr al-Din's affairs and schemes at least from 1628 onwards²⁴—we then find him buying arms in Tuscany.²⁵ It was the very period in which Fakhr's pleading letters to Rome, sent via his then intermediary, Giorgio Maronio, Maronite archbishop of Cyprus, resulted in vague plans for papal assis-

²¹ Domenico Magri, *Viaggio al Monte Libano* (Rome 1624), 44.

²² See Chapter II of this book.

²³ *BAI, BL*, Vol. 3983.

²⁴ The following is a reconstruction of Ecchellen's activities on the basis of a great number of documents connected with Fakhr al-Din published by Carali in his study on the *amir*; however, some of the letters Carali quotes have not been dated correctly.

²⁵ Carali, *Fakhr, o.c.*, docs. CLII, CXLII.

tance in his struggle for greater independence. In sign of Rome's interest in his cause, Fakhr was sent a papal 'letter of consolation', a portrait of Urban VIII, a gift of blessed candles and, also, a translation of the Bible in Arabic.²⁶ Apparently, it was Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the new protector of the Maronite Nation, who was deeply involved in these schemes that, however, in the end proved abortive—as did a parallel and, indeed, linked scheme, whereby Louis XIII of France, with Fakhr's help, would conquer Palestine²⁷ and, one supposes, become the new king of Jerusalem. In obvious concordance with all these projects, in these very years the Congregation of the Propaganda—of which Cardinal Barberini's librarian Lucas Holstenius (1596–1661) was a member—decided to step up its missionary activities in the Near East.²⁸

Despite the unexplainable difference in dates, according to Ecchellen's autobiographical notes he first met the *amir* on his return to Syria in 1631, when Fakhr gave him a grand welcome, eager for information on the state of Christendom.²⁹

Being sympathetic to European culture and its products—probably both for the political advantages such an interest might bring and for its own sake—Fakhr asked for Ecchellen's opinion about the translation of one 'Mattia's' work on medicinal herbs, which had been produced on his request by a Jewish trader called David, and a French merchant, one monsieur Blanc. Obviously, this is Pietro Andrea Mattioli's *Dei discorsi nelli sei libri di Pedacio Dioscuride*, published in Venice in 1585. Ecchellen advised a thorough collation with the original, and promptly got the job, as well as Fakhr's friendship.³⁰ With financial assistance from the *amir*, with a sum of 300 *scudi* annually paid by the Congregation of the Propaganda in Rome, and investing some of his own money

²⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 7817, f. 15^r, sqq.

²⁷ Paris, *Bibliothèque Nationale, Fonds Français*, Vol. 9542, f. 1^{r-v}, 20 July 1629, Theophile Minuti to Peiresc.

²⁸ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 7817, f. 21^r, sqq.

²⁹ *ASR, FCF*, Vol. 64, f. 69^v.

³⁰ [Abraham Ecchellen] *Epistola apologetica (Prima, Altera)*, in *qua diluuntur calumniae ac imposturae quamplures adversus Syriacam Libelli Ruth editionem et eius Latinam versionem, a magistro Valeriano de Flavigny congestae*, [Paris 1647, 1648] (= *Epistola*). This apologetic work actually consists of three pamphlets, of which the first two (1–112; 115–165) are directed against De Flavigny—see below—, and the third (167sqq.) against his Parisian colleague Sionita—also see below: *Epistola apologetica tertia in qua respondetur libello Gabrielis Sionitae*. For the facts cited here: 184–185.

as well,³¹ Ecchellen then proceeded to establish a Maronite school in the Lebanese mountains; the patriarch and a synod especially convened for the purpose gave the enterprise their blessing and support.³²

In 1631, Fakhr al-Din sent Ecchellen to Florence as his special envoy.³³ His mission was a complicated one. Grand Duke Ferdinand had sent a gift of books and medicine, and the *amir* planned to thank him with two bales of silk farmed in his own gardens. Ecchellen was to be the gift bearer.³⁴ However, he also had to sell some 44 more bales of Syrian silk and invest the proceeds in Tuscan government bonds, as a security for Fakhr's younger sons; after a lot of trouble with some greedy Florentine merchants, the sale realized some 22,766 *scudi*.³⁵ Ecchellen also was empowered to buy supplies of powder and arms, and of iron to be used in the founding of cannon.³⁶ However, I think his mission had a cultural side as well, for from 1631 onwards we find a Tuscan physician, Mattia Naldi, as well as Tuscan artists—an architect, a sculptor and an engineer—working in the Lebanon. While the latter constructed Fakhr's famous palace in Beirut as well as a bridge in Sayda,³⁷ the former composed a long propagandistic poem on the Lebanon, first extolling its natural beauty and then glorifying it as the 'theatre of history'. There, a long time ago, the Crusaders had protected the Faith. There, now, the lambs once again were devoured by the ferocious beasts of the wilderness: a new Bouillon was needed.³⁸ This, of course, was a veiled invitation to the French king to take the lead in a new crusade.

In autumn 1631, Ecchellen returned to Syria, only to be sent on another mission,³⁹ now to buy, or rather free slaves on the markets of Northern Africa and conduct a number of other commercial deals⁴⁰—perhaps the sale of silk? Possibly, this time he went by way of Cyprus, where he may have visited the Maronite merchant community, acquiring the knowledge which later enabled him to provide a memorial on

³¹ Cfr. also Anaissi, *o.c.*, 112.

³² *ASR, FCF*, Vol. 64, f. 70^r.

³³ Carali, *Fakhr, o.c.*, docs. CXLII–CLV.

³⁴ *Idem*, docs. CXXXIX, XXXL.

³⁵ *Idem*, docs. CXLIII, CXLV, CXLVII.

³⁶ *Idem*, doc. CXLI.

³⁷ *Idem*, 125–127 and docs. CL, CLVII.

³⁸ The poem is titled "Il Monte Libano, Canzone"; it can be dated to the late 1620's or early 1630's. It is in: *BAV, Manoscritti Chigiani*, Vol. R I 18, fols. 340^r–341^v.

³⁹ *Idem*, doc. CLVII.

⁴⁰ *Idem*, docs. CLI, CLII, CLIX.

the condition of the island that was part of a proposal for a Christian re-conquest of this strategically important stronghold in the eastern Mediterranean.⁴¹ He certainly went by way of Leghorn, there to buy a ship that, after having been used for all his planned transactions, would then be sailed back to Syria.⁴²

After a great many complications with the Tuscan authorities, who did not trust his credentials, Ecchellen travelled to Algiers and Tunis in the Spring of 1633, to transact his slave-freeing business.⁴³ While in Tunis, he also engaged in some literary-epigraphic discussions over supposedly Punic inscriptions, which he recognized as ancient Egyptian, with a fascinating Christian 'renegade' residing there, one Thomas d'Arcos. The latter remains an elusive orientalist, who according to his lively letters to the Provençal erudite Peiresc produced quite a number of interesting works of which, however, nothing seems to have been preserved.⁴⁴

Sometime during fall 1633, Ecchellen returned to Florence.⁴⁵ There, according to his own story, he heard that Fakhr al-Din had been captured by the Turks, brought to Istanbul and been beheaded with his entire family. Whether the *amir*'s reported conversion to Christianity, in 1633,⁴⁶ had had anything to do with Sultan Murad's decision to destroy the power of this over-mighty pseudo-vassal, is not clear. Obviously, Istanbul was worried by Fakhr's actions as well as by his ideas. The fact that the Syrian prince gave the Knights of St. John free access to his ports, supporting them liberally, and also entertained close contacts with other European powers with Mediterranean interests, hardly can have endeared him to the Porte.

⁴¹ Cfr. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Fondo Mediceo (= *ASF, FM*), M 4, Inserta IX, f. 21 and M 4274, bis, Inserta VI, f. 3.

⁴² Carali, *Fakhr, o.c.*, doc. CLVII.

⁴³ *ASF, FM*, Vol. M 6, ff. 330, 348, 351, 365. Cfr. the introduction to the 1647-edition of the *De Proprietatibus*.

⁴⁴ Ph. Tamizey de Larroque (ed.), *Les Correspondants de Peiresc. Vol. XV. Thomas d'Arcos. Lettres inédites écrites de Tunis à Peiresc (1633-1636)* (Algiers 1889), 27.

⁴⁵ Carali, *Fakhr, o.c.*, doc. CLII; cfr. also *ASF, FM*, M 6, ff. 381, 548, 553, 573.

⁴⁶ Carali, *Fakhr, o.c.*, 410.

The second Italian period: 1633–1640

With Fakhr's death, there came an end to Ecchellen's career at the side of a man who might have altered the course of Mediterranean history. The discrepancy between the autobiographical notes and the other sources may indicate that at a later stage of his life, Abraham wished to hush up these early political activities.

Now, stranded in Tuscany, he probably found himself quite lucky with the grandducal offer of a chair of Arabic and Syriac at the university of Pisa—the government of Florence continued to be interested in the affairs of Syria and the Lebanon, scheming with Fakhr's erstwhile friend Abu Nader to retain some influence, there. From the sideline, Francesco Barberini was watching as well, concerned about the education of Maronite boys at schools and colleges that served to stress the need to keep to the Roman obedience.⁴⁷

It is not clear whether this was the precise period Ecchellen started collaborating with the Tuscan mathematician Alfonso Borelli. At the request of the Grand Duke, they produced a translation of books Five, Six and Seven of the *Kōnika* of Apollonius of Perge, based on the Arabic version of Abu al-Fath al-Isfahani, a manuscript of which had been brought to Florence by the Syrian patriarch Ignatius Ni'matullah. Certainly, the work was of long gestation. Only in 1661, the *Apollonii Pergaei Conicorum Libri V, VI et VII* were published; added to it was a compilation and translation of writings by Archimedes, from the Arabic edition of Thabit ibn Kurra (836–901).⁴⁸

Obviously, Ecchellen must have acquired some fame in his own chosen field, oriental linguistics, for in 1636, Pope Urban VIII asked him to come to Rome, offering him a chair of Arabic and Syriac at the papal university. Abraham now entered the service of the Congregation of the Propaganda as well, being nominated a member of the committee instituted to produce a new Arabic version of the Bible. In this function, he succeeded his fellow countryman Yuhanna al-Hawshabi al-Hasruni.⁴⁹ He soon became friends with his older colleague Lucas Holstenius.

Ecchellen, like his Maronite and Syrian compatriots resident in Rome, must have worked hard: we constantly find them asking the

⁴⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 7817, f. 32^r, sqq.

⁴⁸ Graf, *o.c.*, III, 361.

⁴⁹ Raphael, *o.c.*, 96–97. Al-Hasruni also had collaborated with Gabriel Sionita—see below—on the publication of al-Idrisi's *Geography*.

authorities of the Vatican Library for permission to use its holdings. Eventually, the Propaganda enlisted the Library's support for the printing of the manuscript, with a request for the use of its extensive collection of oriental type.⁵⁰

Ecchellen's first French period: 1640–1642

However, after four strenuous years in Rome, a very gratifying request arrived from Paris. The French king, Louis XIII, and his all-powerful first minister, the Cardinal-Duke of Richelieu, asked the Congregation of the Propaganda to 'lend' them Ecchellen's services for one year.⁵¹ The Maronite was to work on the Parisian edition of the Polyglot Bible, a version of Holy Scripture in seven languages, soon to become one of the great feats of 17th-century European scholarship and typography. The Pope could not very well afford not to support such a nobly religious venture and, hence, had to let Ecchellen go, however much he might resent this French initiative that robbed him of the glory which such a project would have brought him, the more so as, obviously, this was one more move of the French authorities to replace Rome as the normative capital of European culture.

The story of Ecchellen's first year in France is a complicated one.⁵² The arrival of the young Maronite scholar soon proved too much for his already famous compatriot, Gabriel Sionita or, to give him his original name Djabra'il al-Sahyuni (1577–1648).⁵³ From the age of seven, he had been a pupil at the Maronite College in Rome, too. Proceeding to the chair of Arabic and Syriac at the *Sapienza*, he then had been asked to come to Paris to take the professorship of Semitic

⁵⁰ This can be deduced from: Chr. M. Gräfinger, *Die Ausleihe Vatikanischer Handschriften und Druckwerke (1563–1700)* (Città del Vaticano 1993), 435, 437, 439, 448 et cetera.

⁵¹ *ASR, FCF*, Vol. 64, f. 70^v.

⁵² The following story has been reconstructed on the basis of a compilation of 94 letters documenting the work of a group of scholars—several of whom, such as Jean Morin, Pietro della Valle, et cetera at one time or another having been connected with the Barberini-court—who had studied the relationship between the Eastern and Western Churches: (J. Morin), *Antiquitates Ecclesiae Orientalis Clarissimorum Virorum Card. Barberini, L. Allatii, Luc. Holstenii, Joh. Morini, Abrah. Ecchellensis, Nic. Peyrescii, Pet. a Valle, Tho. Comberi, Joh. Buxtorfii, H. Hottingeri, etc. Dissertationibus Epistolicis enucleatae. Nunc ex ipsis autographis editae. Quibus praefixa est Jo. Morini Cong. Orat. Paris. PP. Vita* (London 1680) (= *Antiquitates*); I have also used: *Epistola, o.c.*

⁵³ Raphael, *o.c.*, 73sq.; Graf, *o.c.*, III, 351–353.

languages. Thus, his career prefigured that of Ecchellen's. Moreover, not only had he published one of the earliest Arabic grammars in the West—it appeared in Paris in 1619—he also had edited al-Idrisi's *Geography*, that monument of Arab geographical literature, the *Nuzhat al-mushtak fi dhikr al-amsar wa al-aktar*. In 1635, he published a Syriac-Chaldean grammar.⁵⁴ In the same year, he had translated Cardinal Bellarmine's catechism into Arabic—clearly as part of another French move to wrench the initiative from Rome and bolster up their own bid for power in the Christian worlds of South-Eastern Europe and the Near East for, besides Sionita's Arabic version, between 1628 and 1635 the French also published Greek, Armenian and Serbo-Croat editions of this text.

Now, Sionita—together with the Oratorian priest Jean Morin, whom Ecchellen had got to know in Rome, in 1639⁵⁵—was one of the intellectual fathers of the Parisian 'Biblia Polyglotta'-enterprise which, however, was directed by a French patrician, named Michel le Jay, who also paid for it. Though it did reproduce, basically, Christopher Plantin's great Antwerp Polyglot Bible of 1569–1572, it was planned and finally published with some notable additions. Amongst these were the so-called 'Samaritan Pentateuch', edited by Morin on the basis of a manuscript recently acquired in the Near East by the Provençal nobleman Nicholas Fabri de Peiresc—one of Pope Urban's and Cardinal Barberini's good friends—as well as a Syriac edition of the Old Testament and, finally, an Arabic version of it.

Originally, Ecchellen, probably unaware of the petty scheming amongst these Bible-entrepreneurs, was asked to act as reader of Sionita's translations, a proposal readily accepted by the elder Maronite as his work was not universally applauded by the scholarly world. Actually, being accused of laziness and incompetence, Sionita was overjoyed to have the quality of his products confirmed by his rising young colleague⁵⁶—or so he hoped. Ecchellen's authority in these matters was the stronger as he brought with him a rare manuscript, containing a Syriac version of the Old Testament given to him by the above-mentioned Sergius Rizzi.⁵⁷ The Maronite prelate had compiled this ver-

⁵⁴ The manuscript text is in: *BAV, Barberini Orientali*, Vol. 55.

⁵⁵ On Morin's background and friendship with Ecchellen: *Antiquitates, o.c.*, 21, 39, 69–70.

⁵⁶ *Antiquitates, o.c.*, 298–299, Morin to Ecchellen, August 3, 1641; cfr. *Epistola, o.c.*, 126sqq.

⁵⁷ *Epistola, o.c.*, 126sqq.; *Antiquitates, o.c.*, 70.

sion on the basis of a great number of Arabic and Syriac manuscripts which he had collated with the Vulgate; much care had been taken to present the vocalization signs according to the old usage, as they were of crucial importance to the understanding of the text; the proper sequence of verses, chapters and of the Books themselves, had been realized through a typographically intricate presentation.⁵⁸ One copy of the work had been given to the Vatican Library, on the basis of whose holdings it had been produced; another one now came to Paris with Ecchellen, which seems to evince the young scholar was taken seriously by his elders. It was now used to collate Sionita's versions.

However, the conflict between Le Jay and his senior co-editor Jean de Vitry on the one, and Sionita on the other hand, already nascent since 1638, escalated when Le Jay announced he wanted to fire Sionita.⁵⁹ The latter now began to publicly attack them, but included Ecchellen as well. Among other things, Abraham was accused of having produced little or nothing during his stay in Paris.⁶⁰ This, however, was manifestly untrue. Although the Propaganda Congregation had given Ecchellen one year's leave of absence, only, the Maronite, according to his public defence published later, prepared no less than four chapters of Esther, four of Ruth and of the first Book of Kings, as well as Baruch, Judith, Maccabees and Tobias.⁶¹ From other sources we know he even achieved a lot more than that,⁶² though the two works he published in Paris in 1641 at least partly must have originated in Rome.

Both these publications seem to reflect a particular concern of Ecchellen's, setting the tone for his future intellectual and scholarly endeavours. First, a book appeared titled *Sanctissimi patris nostri B. Antonii Magni monachorum omnium parentis Epistolae viginti*. Dedicated to Francesco Barberini, as Cardinal-*Padrone* and one of Rome's acknowledged patrons of the arts and sciences, it contained the Latin translation of the twenty-one known letters written by this fourth-century saint and Church Father to his disciples. Ecchellen had used an Arabic manuscript, written in Egypt around the year 800, which was now in the possession of the Maronite College in Rome.

⁵⁸ *BAV, VL*, Vol. 7763, f. 41^r, a letter from Rizzi to the Vatican Library.

⁵⁹ Le Jay's version of the problems is given in his letters to the Dupuy-Brothers: Paris, *Bibliothèque Nationale, Fonds Français*, Vol. 9, 169^r sqq.

⁶⁰ *Epistola, o.c.*, 143sqq.

⁶¹ *Idem*, *ibidem*.

⁶² *ASR, FCF*, Vol. 64, ff. 81^r–83^r contain a list of Ecchellen's publications.

In his introduction, he addressed some issues that were to remain important to him. In this particular case, a defence of the monastic tradition, so fundamental to Maronite culture, was quite to the point, indeed, as Rome still sought to combat the onslaughts on this very tradition by both Calvinists and Lutherans who, according to Ecchellen, even dared argue that no such tradition had existed in the first years of the Church. He quoted the Fathers as well as early Islamic writers to establish the fact that a monastic way of life had existed in Egypt even before Christ's birth. Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad himself had admonished his followers to respect this old tradition. Not surprisingly, in the privilege Ecchellen's printer obtained for the booklet, its importance in the war against heretics and latitudinarians now being waged by the Roman Church was specifically mentioned. In all this, we may assume some influence of one of Ecchellen's by now close Roman friends, Lucas Holste, who, as a scholar, was much interested in the original unity of the Western and the Oriental Churches and as one of Cardinal Barberini's most influential advisers, was instrumental in implementing Rome's religious policy in this field.

In the booklet, Ecchellen also expounds his method. A translation should be literal rather than literary, especially since so many Latinists have a tendency to use the limited vocabulary of the Classics to translate texts from another culture—this, of course, was a very important remark, relating to discussions which have dominated Europe's description and understanding of non-European languages well into the 19th century. However, as Ecchellen had not made a copy of the original text, and the Maronite College refused to send him the original manuscript, he did not reproduce the Arabic version alongside his translation.

Ecchellen's second publication of 1641 was the *Synopsis Propositorum Sapientiae Arabum Philosophorum inscripta Speculum Mundum repraesentans*. This was the Latin translation of an Arabic version of an originally Persian collection of theses proposed by Husayn ibn Mu'in al-Din al-Maybudi, around AD 1485.⁶³ The 26 propositions that constitute the text deal with every field of science and learning, from God's knowledge of Man and Creation, via stellar movements and cosmography to alchemy.

⁶³ Graf, *o.c.*, III, 356; Brock, *o.c.*, II, 210. I assume it probably goes back to: *BAV, Barberini Orientali*, Vol. 92/2.

The edition, dedicated to the Cardinal-Duke of Richelieu, rather flatteringly compared the French first minister to King Solomon, as both were the recipients of Arab wisdom—the Queen of Sheba being presented as an early representative of Arab culture. Moreover, Ecchellen hailed Richelieu as a champion of the collaboration between Occident and Orient, and does not fail to remind him of that courageous small Christian group living in Syria, descending from the ancient Franks, of whom the late Fakhr al-Din had been the exemplary leader; as an aside, Ecchellen recounted how the *amir*, while teaching him the Arab way of lance fighting, had deplored Europe's lack of interest in a common attack on Islam—presumably as embodied in the Ottomans—to regain the country where Christianity had originated.

This heavily political dedication obviously meant to appeal to some vague notions that France's political leader was known to entertain. Yet, after his own, earlier experiences with the lukewarm French support of the plans of Fakhr al-Din, Ecchellen cannot really have thought the Cardinal still intended to organize a crusade, but fact was that France showed quite a serious interest in extending its influence in the Levant, both commercial and political. Religion was one means to this end, and Richelieu had personally financed Sionita's Arabic translation of the Catechism, which then had been freely distributed in Syria and Lebanon.

Undeniably, Ecchellen had used his year in Paris as best he could; though it is difficult to determine the quality of Ecchellen's personality, and his real stance in this row, at least in that respect, Sionita's accusations against him were entirely ungrounded. In his letters to his friend and helper Lucas Holstenius, who furnished him with Roman material that could not be had in Paris, Abraham tried to analyse the current problems, offering some of the explanations cited above: Sionita was lazy, indeed, and did suspect him of trying to gain all the credit for the Arabic and Syriac versions of the *Polyglotta*; moreover, many Frenchmen were jealous of both of them; but he, Ecchellen, enjoyed Richelieu's respect.

Ecchellen also wrote Holste that pamphlets presenting the various points of view had appeared, to yet increase the tumult. But though even the papal *nuncio* had intervened on his behalf and the prime minister did indeed back him as well, the situation remained highly unpleasant.

Of course, work suffered from it, too, though he and others continued to watch to its quality. They now discussed the question whether

or not all manuscript versions in Arabic and Syrian existing in Rome should be consulted, after copies have been made with Barberini's consent; in view of expediency, Ecchellen favoured a limited approach, using the Arabic Bible manuscript of the convent of San Pietro in Montorio, only.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, the importance of the Paris Polyglotta already was being internationally acknowledged. Much support was given by English scholars. Amongst others, Ecchellen's friend Edward Pocock (1604–1691), professor of Arabic at Oxford, had offered his help to the Parisians, afterwards using their version of the *Pentateuch* as the basis for his part of the London Bible.⁶⁵ In 1657, Bishop Brian Walton finally produced an English *Polyglotta*.

In November 1641, Ecchellen again wrote to Holste,⁶⁶ asking him to present his edition of the letters of Antonius Magnus to Cardinal Barberini and announcing his return. The troubles with the Polyglotta had been solved by him to everybody's content; obviously, he referred to a contract that he had signed with Le Jay and Sionita as long ago as August, 15, which gave him the final responsibility for the Arabic, Latin and Syriac translations and edition of the books Baruch, Esther, Judith, Maccabees, Ruth and Tobias, to be produced on the basis of manuscripts from the Maronite Colleges in Rome and Ravenna as well as the Old Testament manuscript formerly belonging to Rizzi.⁶⁷

The third Italian period: 1642–1644

Early February 1642, Ecchellen left Paris for Rome, against Richelieu's express wishes—the Prime Minister offered him a professorship at the Collège Royale and a stipend of 600 *scudi* a year—but on Cardinal Barberini's clear orders. His friend Jean Morin praised his work in a letter of recommendation to the Roman orientalist scholar Abbot Hilarion Rancati,⁶⁸ indicating everybody hoped for Ecchellen's speedy return to France and remarking, rather disparagingly “*quae enim ad litteras spectant multo commodius Parisiis quam Romae instruantur et conficiuntur*”, thus

⁶⁴ Ecchellen to Holste, March 29, and November 22, 1641, in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6499, fols. 1^r–2^v; 3^r.

⁶⁵ *Idem*, *ibidem*.

⁶⁶ *Idem*, f. 3^r, Ecchellen to Holste, Paris, November 22, 1641.

⁶⁷ *Epistola, o.c.*, 146.

⁶⁸ *Antiquitates, o.c.*, 300–301, Morin to Rancati, January 16, 1641.

implicitly referring to the cultural rivalry between the two towns and their courts that manifested itself all through the first half of the 17th century and must have been the very reason why the Cardinal-*Padrone* wished to attach the rising young scholar once more to the Roman Curia. When Morin, trying his best, warmly recommended his friend to the Cardinal,⁶⁹ suggesting Ecchellen really should be allowed to return to France, Barberini replied that he needed Ecchellen's expertise to help defend the ancient traditions of the Church against the attacks of all sorts of free thinkers.⁷⁰

We know little to nothing about Ecchellen's activities during the next two years. He probably resumed his former tasks at the college of the Propaganda, but he also must have started working on some projects that matured in later years, viz. a follow-up on his edition of the letters of Antonius Magnus and an edition of the Arabic version of the constitutions of the Council of Nicea.⁷¹

Meanwhile, Paris still beckoned, perhaps the more so when, after the death of Urban VIII, the Barberini were temporarily out of favour. In 1644, we find Ecchellen writing to Jean Morin in answer to a series of detailed questions about Maronite liturgy, the disposition of Maronite churches and a number of other characteristics of the Oriental Church.⁷² Obviously, Morin was already collecting some of the material which, some ten years later, was published in his great compilation of texts on Eastern liturgy and ritual, about which they continued to correspond.⁷³ As an afterthought, Ecchellen complained that old friends like Le Jay had 'done nothing for him', and that he was now 'writing to Mazarin', viz. to Giulio Mazarini—Cardinal Jules Mazarin in his French guise—, who was then at the first height of his power as France's new prime minister. Apparently, his scheme was successful. Assisted by another Cardinal Mazarini, the prime minister's brother Michele, Ecchellen now obtained a position as royal interpreter for Arabic and Syriac. The lordly stipend of 900 *scudi* annually that, to

⁶⁹ *Idem*, 302–303, Morin to Barberini, January 16, 1641.

⁷⁰ *Idem*, 306–307, Barberini to Morin, February s.d., 1642.

⁷¹ M. Breydy, 'Abraham Ecchellensis et les Canons Arabes de Nicée', in: *Parole d'Orient*, X (1981–1982), 223–225. The Nicea-text used by Ecchellen may have been: *BAV, Barberini Orientali*, Vol. 111.

⁷² *Antiquitates*, o.c., 326–334, Ecchellen to Morin, April 22, 1644.

⁷³ J. Morin, *Commentarius de Sacris Ecclesiae Oratationibus* (Paris 1655). Cfr. the letters in *Antiquitates*, o.c., 449–470, 473–475 and 478–480, from 1654 and 1655; cfr. also *Epistola*, o.c., 277–285, Ecchellen to Morin, July 13, 1654, on questions of Maronite ritual.

his obvious content, he negotiated, indicates that this cannot have been a mere sinecure. It also necessitated a second transfer to France.⁷⁴

In Paris, the two projects Ecchellen had undertaken in Rome were published in 1645 and 1646. Quite probably, they had been financed by the man to whom Abraham dedicated them,⁷⁵ Cardinal Barberini, whose ideas they fitted very neatly indeed. Barberini himself, in these years, lived in Paris, where he had taken voluntary exile.

In his introduction to the 1645 *Concilii Niceaeni Praefatio una cum titulis et argumentis Canonum et Constitutionum eiusdem, qui hactenus apud Orientales nationes extant, nunc primum ex Arabica lingua Latine redditi ab Abrahamis Ecchellensi ... cum eiusdem notis*, Ecchellen explicitly states that the present decrees and dogmas of the Church are in complete accordance with the early Christian ones, notwithstanding the arguments of latitudinarians and heretics. He first raises an issue which, I think, from then on became the basic reason behind his future projects, when he argues that in almost every field of culture and scholarship, Arabic texts have retained much that has been lost in the West; just so in theological and canonical matters, for a comparison between the Greek and Latin versions of the Council's decrees on the one hand, and the Arabic manuscripts on the other has shown that the Oriental tradition is much stronger; in a series of extensive notes, Ecchellen elaborates this point, specifically drawing attention to the 44th Nicean canon which gave the patriarch of Alexandria the title of *metropolit*, thus establishing him as the virtual head of the Christian Church, a role which was then assumed by the Roman pontiff.

In 1646, Ecchellen published his *Sapientissimi patris nostri Antonii Magni abbatis regulae, sermones, documenta, admonitiones, responsiones et vita duplex*, which, obviously, was the fruit of his previous Roman research.⁷⁶ According to the preface, the author had promised Cardinal Barberini to continue his Antonine studies. For this purpose, he had consulted manuscripts both in the Vatican Library and the Maronite College, but also a text provided by Giovanni Battista Maro, a scholarly monk of the Roman church of Sant'Angelo in Pesceria—a Maronite, it would seem—as well as some texts brought to the Roman monastery of San

⁷⁴ On the financial side of his Parisian stay: Ecchellen to Holste, September 16, 1645, in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6499, f. 4^r.

⁷⁵ Ecchellen to Holste, 16 September 1645, in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6499, f. 4^r.

⁷⁶ On the printing of this text: Ecchellen to Holste, September 16, 1645, in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6499, f. 4^r.

Pietro in Montorio by a Franciscan monk, formerly papal commissioner of the Holy Land, one Andreas Arcuensis. The latter, very old manuscripts collected, under the title *Clavis Ianuae Paradisi*, both a *Vita* of Saint Anthony and the texts of some monastic hymns invoking the saint. Ecchellen's scholarly attitude was such that he could plainly state there was no proof of the sermons etcetera actually having been written by Saint Anthony; a very old tradition, however, which was explicit in the manuscript, connects these writings with the saint and should therefore be accepted.

The second French period: 1644–1651

While in Paris, Ecchellen basked in Mazarin's favour. It became manifest in the professorship of Arabic and Syriac at the Collège Royal which, according to Ecchellen's own saying, was specifically created for him by the prime minister and the Grand Chancellor of France, Pierre Seguier. It brought him another 360 *scudi* a year. This largesse, of course, was bound to once more create professional jealousy, and so it did.

Other professors at the Collège started vilifying their Maronite colleague, targeting their attack on his Polyglot past.⁷⁷ One Valerian de Flavigny, who held the chair of Hebrew, maintained that the Hebrew version of the Bible, being the oldest, was the only trustworthy one, characterizing the Vulgate as a work that was a "*rivulus turbidissimus, cisterna dissipata* [which] *aquas continere non potest.*" Having based his own translations on, amongst other texts, the Vulgate, Ecchellen took his pen and wrote a flaming defence, arguing that as the Hebrew version had been authenticated after the Babylonian exile by Ezra and a council of elders, so the popes and the Council of Trent had authorized the Vulgate—and, moreover, one could not very well maintain that the Synagogue had received the Holy Spirit's support to the same measure as Holy Church, or could one? Besides, the Hebrew version was far from purely Mosaic, or even prophetic: the text had been corrupted, both intentionally, by the rabbinical tradition, and unintentionally, by the many copyists. Then, of course, there was the problem created by the invention and introduction of a system of dots

⁷⁷ The story of this episode in: *Epistola, o.c.*, 3–165, as well as in Ecchellen's autobiographical notes in: ASR, FCF, Vol. 64.

by the post-Talmudic rabbis of Tiberias, which had greatly complicated the text. According to Ecchellen, Flavigny knew next to nothing of the manifold problems involved in deciphering Hebrew, Arabic and Syriac texts with or without the vocalization and other signs involved.

In two long letters to the public,⁷⁸ Ecchellen presented his arguments, which created a huge row with Flavigny. As a Frenchman and a nobleman, a canon of Reims cathedral, a doctor of the Sorbonne and a professor at the Collège Royal, this worthy felt insulted as never before in his life, and finally tried to drag Ecchellen to court, a move, however, which caused the entire Sorbonne to square behind the foreigner. Whether the account given by the Huguenot scholar Pierre Bayle, writing some decades later, can be trusted, remains unclear;⁷⁹ he maintains it all went back to a mistake made by Flavigny's printer, and soon acknowledged by the learned professor, though Ecchellen went on attacking him.

In the meantime, the now ageing Sionita saw his chance to settle an old account and entered the arena with a pamphlet that accused Ecchellen of privateering—in the Mediterranean—and profiteering—in accepting a salary of some 3000 *livres* annually without producing anything worthwhile for the *Polyglotta*.⁸⁰ This, of course, was a hit below the belt, and Ecchellen hardly can be blamed for retaliating in kind, with a letter that not only set things straight biographically

⁷⁸ [Abraham Ecchellen] *Epistola apologetica (Prima, Altera), in qua diluuntur calumniae ac imposturae quamplures adversus Syriacam Libelli Ruth editionem et eius Latinam versionem, a magistro Valeriano de Flavigny congestae*, [Paris 1647, 1648]. The first two pamphlets in this apologetic work (1–112; 115–165) are directed against De Flavigny.

⁷⁹ Up till now unnoticed is the additional, rather gossipy material provided by: P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (Basle 1741, sixth edition), Vol. II, 335–336, as well as the summary of this article in: L. Moreri, *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique* (Paris 1759), Vol. IV, *in voce* Ecchellensis; my attention to this source was kindly drawn by my colleague Mrs. Dr L. van Lieshout. I have not introduced Bayle's data in my text because his comments on Ecchellen's behaviour in the Flavigny-case seem inspired by religious-political reasons, mainly; Bayle obviously did not take kindly to the fact that in the famous debate between Arnauld and Claude, the former used some small piece of evidence produced by Ecchellen, concerning Melchite religion; Claude, in his turn, tried to discredit his opponent's source by accusing Ecchellen of having disrupted life in the Maronite College in Rome, having cheated on Fakhr al-Din, having been imprisoned in Florence, et cetera; all of these quite improbable opinions are uncritically reproduced by the self-confessed critical Bayle.

⁸⁰ *Epistola, o.c.*, 183–185.

speaking, but also managed to take Sionita to task about his defective knowledge of Arabic and Syriac, especially where the sticky problems of vocalization were concerned.⁸¹

Cardinal Mazarin, who at this time was bolstering up his power by establishing himself as one of France's foremost patrons of the arts and sciences, in return for his protection expected Ecchellen to help him build the great library which was one of the most clamorous manifestations of his cultural leadership and constituted a sort of long-term propagandistic investment; for as with the Barberini Library in Rome, scholars who were enabled and encouraged to consult the treasures of Mazarin's library often published the contents of the precious manuscripts contained therein in editions which, of course, then spread the collector's fame even more widely.

This precisely was what Ecchellen himself did in publishing one of the results of his perusal of Mazarin's Arabic and Syriac manuscripts and mentioning the Cardinal's name in the title. He had discovered an Arabic text, the *Ta'lim al-muta'allim*, by Burhan al-Din al-Zarnudji, an essay on science and scholarship written, perhaps, in the year AD 1203;⁸² this, I think, must have fitted in nicely with his earlier publication on the Arabic philosophy of science, of 1641.

Though, in cases such as these, it sometimes was Ecchellen's wont to rather stress the fact that a text he thought valuable was in Arabic than describing its author as an adherent of Islam, he now identified the writer as a Hanafite lawyer who intended his work as a practical guide for medresse-students; Ecchellen also noted that the writer, not unlike St Thomas Aquinas, emphasizes Man's obligation to use God's most precious gift, that of the intellect, through which one may attain true knowledge.

In his introduction, Ecchellen discourses on the attributes and attitude that constitute the scholarly mind, and the methods by which knowledge can be gained, providing a running commentary on the

⁸¹ *Ibidem*.

⁸² Brock, *o.c.*, I, 462; suppl. I, 837. On the importance of this text: K.A. Totah, *The Contribution of Arabs to Education* (New York 1926), esp. 67–76. Other editions are the Latin one by C. Caspar, published in Leipzig in 1838, as well as the editions of Constantinople 1875, and Cairo 1914 and 1925. An English translation was produced by: G. von Grünebaum and Th.M. Abel, *Az-Zarnudji Ta'lim al-Muta'allim—Tarikh at-Ta'allum. Instruction of the Student: the Method of Learning* (New York 1947).

Prophet Muhammed's *dicta* in this field. He explains that, notwithstanding the Prophet's rather negative attitude to the world of learning, philosophy and logic are important elements of Islamic culture, more specifically referring to the efforts of the Caliph al-Ma'mun (AD 786–833) to further the cause of scholarship by, amongst other things, promoting the translation of early Greek and Christian scientific texts—here, of course, Ecchellen referred to the activities of the famous 'House of Wisdom', established at Baghdad by this caliph.

Short as it was, in Ecchellen's opinion this particular tract provided a succinct guide to a very important topic, useful for Christians, too. The analogy seems obvious, the more so when Ecchellen points to some Arabic manuscripts which he deems of great interest to European culture, viz. the as yet unpublished *Decades* of Livy, in the royal library of the Escorial, the *Konika* of Apollonius of Perge, in the grandducal library of Tuscany, and some Aristotelian and Euclidian treatises in Mazarin's collection. As we will see, he already was outlining his own publication program for the years to come.

In his dedication to Pierre Seguier, Ecchellen also mentioned the friendship shown to him by men like Le Jay, Gaulmain, Mondin and Thevenot—whom we shall meet again—indicating, of course, the circle of Parisian orientalist who must have been his natural milieu. The importance of the text and of Ecchellen's translation was obvious, as appears from the fact that in 1709 it was again published, now in Utrecht, by the famous Dutch orientalist Hadrianus Reland, as: *Enchiridion Studiosi, Arabice conscriptum a Borchaneddino Alzernouchi, cum duplici versione Latina, altera a Frederico Rostgaard, sub auspiciis Josephi Banesii, Maronitae Syri, Romae elaborata, altera Abrahami Ecchellensi.*

Mazarin's maecenateic glory was again extolled in Ecchellen's next Parisian publication, *De proprietatibus ac virtutibus medicis animalium, plantarum ac gemmarum tractatus triplex, auctore Habdarrahmano Asiutensi Aegyptio...ex ms. codice Bibliothecae Eminentissimi Cardinalis Mazarini.* Two months before this book appeared, Mazarin had acquired some one hundred Arabic manuscripts, and Ecchellen had started to work on an inventory; while cataloguing these texts, he discovered this particular treatise, which he collated with another one from the library of the Oratorians. To the edition, he added two further treatises, both from the rich manuscript collection of his friend Melchisedech Thevenot (1620?-1692). Whereas the first one dealt with the curative possibilities of animal products, the second discussed the medicinal properties of plants and the third those of gems; the three of them are now known to be the

Diwan al-hayawan of one and the same 15th-century author, Abdarrahman bin Abu Bakr Djalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445–1508).⁸³

In his notes Ecchellen, as well as using other manuscripts from the Mazarin-collection, also drew upon his personal experience, as when he tells that he owed his knowledge of gems partly to the Polish court jeweler, Giovanni Battista Iona, who for long years had lived in Cairo. In the dedication to Francois Vautier, a famous lawyer as well as medical doctor, formerly court physician to Queen Maria de'Medici, Ecchellen found an opportunity to draw attention to the Arab or rather Islamic world view, when he wrote: “tota scientiae ratio bipartita distinguitur apud Arabes sapientes (...) in illum scilicet, quae ad animos pertinet, sive legem, atque in illam, quae ad corpora spectat, sive medicinam”, thus once again stressing the importance of learning from Arab culture, to strengthen the Christian position.

Questioned about what occupied Ecchellen's attention between 1646 and 1651, the sources again remain silent, although we know he contributed a piece on the Eastern pre-sanctification liturgy to the great work of a Roman contemporary and, indeed, colleague of his, Leone Allacci's *De Ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetuae consensione*, another of Rome's propagandistic offensives against the Protestant influence in the Orthodox world, which was published in Cologne in 1648.

However, we may infer that Ecchellen must have been studying quite a number of topics if we are to believe a list he gave to Carlo Cartari, though most of the items on it have not resulted in a publication or, for that matter, in manuscripts that have come down to us.⁸⁴ Still, certain questions which he may have been pondering did, in one way or another, return in works published after 1651, but it seems that several important projects which Ecchellen may have been working on in these very years did not come to full fruition.

Thus, for example, his plan to edit various writings of St. John Maro, the real founding father of the Maronite Church. Ecchellen never realized the publication of the saint's treatises, nor did he manage to edit, as he planned, the tracts he had discovered on such topics as the Jacobite liturgy, Church hierarchy, monophysitism, monotheletism and Nestorianism—the last three, obviously, aimed at a proper definition of the Maronite stance especially as to the true nature of the Christ.⁸⁵

⁸³ Brock., *o.c.*, II, 143, 158.

⁸⁴ *ASR, FCF*, Vol. 64, ff. 83^{r-v}.

⁸⁵ *Idem*, f. 84^r, according to a later note from Ecchellen, dated November 12, 1657.

Another theme that had interested Ecchellen for a long time, seems to have occupied his thoughts in Paris as well. Among the projects he listed, one was described as *Paralleli seu collatio dogmatum orientalium nationum cum dogmatibus Ecclesiae Romanae et protestantium ubi ad oculos demonstratus orientales in nullo convenire articulo cum Protestantibus, ex iis qui ipsos inter et Ecclesia Romana controvertentur uti iactant*. This, of course, ties up with his Nicean publication, as well as with a letter which he wrote, and published, on request of Barthold Nihusius, a learned Dutch convert who, as a priest, first worked in the Netherlands and then became auxiliary bishop of Mainz, *De usu communionis sub unius specie apud Orientales*.⁸⁶ Nihusius had enlisted Ecchellen's help against the many efforts made in the 1640s and '50s by Dutch, English and German Protestants especially, to come to terms in one way or another with other non-Roman, Christian Churches. In this cause, Hugo Grotius wrote his tract on the truth of Christianity (1622; 1640) to propagate the Protestant version of the Christian faith in the Arab-speaking world; his text had been translated into Arabic by Ecchellen's friend Edward Pocock; he himself contributed an Arabic rendering of the Anglican catechism and liturgy to this cause, whereas Johann Heinrich Hottinger gave the Near East his Arabic translation of the *Confessio Helvetica*.

Whereas this policy of the Protestant nations naturally chagrined Rome, it also grated on the mind of Ecchellen and his likes, the more so as the Maronite must have interpreted these overtures as proof that his Church still was considered different, not in communion with Rome, whereas precisely part of his own scholarly work had been directed towards establishing the historicity of this very union.

In 1655, Ecchellen's work in this field reached its final attainment with the publication, in Mainz—perhaps through Nihusius?—, of a text whose title was its programme: *Concordia nationum christianorum, per Asiam, Africam et Europam, in fidei catholicae dogmatibus, apud borealis Europae Protestantibus deseri, contra fas, pronuper coeptis, indicata ab Abrahamo Ecchellensi, Maronita, et Leone Allatio, Graeco. Juncta sunt Bartholdi Nihusii duo ad Protestantium eorundem Academicos programmata*. In it, he argued that the representatives of the Eastern Churches, in complete accordance with the teachings of, not to say subservient to the Roman primate, proclaimed Rome's right to rule the Christian world, indeed the World.

⁸⁶ *ASR, FCF*, Vol. 64, f. 83^v.

Some projects that may have been started in Paris, whether during his first or his second stay, never were finished, either. Amongst them was, perhaps, Ecchellen's Latin translation of the 'Geography' of Abu al-Fida Isma'il bin Ali (1273–1331), prince of Hamsa.⁸⁷ The existence of this important text among the *Vaticani Orientali* manuscripts was known to that inveterate hoarder of geographical information, Lucas Holste who, already in 1628, had asked Barberini to find him a man well-versed in Arabic to provide a Latin translation of the very long, descriptive title of Abu al-Fida's treatise, which he wanted to include in his projected 'History of Ancient Geography'.⁸⁸ Apparently, Barberini had asked a Maronite scholar who at that time was studying the Vatican Arabic manuscripts, Vittorio Scialac Accurra, or rather Nasrallah Shalak al-Akuri, the founder of the Maronite College in Ravenna;⁸⁹ though coming up with a paraphrase of sorts, he finally noted: 'This book cannot be understood, either in its entirety or in parts.'⁹⁰ In the same year, Ecchellen, then still a pupil at the Maronite College, had been consulted when Accurra sold a collection of Arabic manuscripts to the *Vaticana*.⁹¹

Whether, at a later stage, he was tempted to try his hand where his learned compatriot had failed, we do not know. Fact is that a translation, in his hand, of the greater part of Abu al-Fida's *Geography* now exists among the Barberini manuscripts.⁹² However, since we know that Thevenot used parts of Ecchellen's translation for his famous collection of *Relations de divers Voyages* (Paris, 1666)—specifically for the parts about Hind and Sind, or "Les climats Alhend et Alsend de la Geographie d'Abulfeda"—it is equally possible that Ecchellen only started working on this project when he met Thevenot during his first Parisian stay.

⁸⁷ A definite edition was published by: J.F. Reinaud, ed., *Geographie d'Aboulfeda*, Vols. I–III (Paris 1848–1883), which does not acknowledge Ecchellen's translation; nor did F. Wüstenfeld, ed., *Abulfedae Tabulae Quaedam Geographicae nunc primum Arabice edidit, Latine vertit, notis illustravit* (Göttingen 1833).

⁸⁸ L. Holste to N. de Peiresc, February 11, 1628, in: J. Boissonnade, ed., *Lucae Holstenii Epistolae ad Diversos* (Paris 1817), 80.

⁸⁹ Raphael, *o.c.*, 61, note 2; Ricerche, *o.c.*, 285. Accurra was a professor at the *Sapienza* from 1610–1631. He wrote a hitherto unknown *Nationis Maronitarum Defensio*: see *BAV, Manoscritti Borgiani Latini*, Vol. 30, ff. 1–263^v.

⁹⁰ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 7763, ff. 42^{r-v}; he translated Abu al-Fida's work as the *Liber Dispositionis Regionum*.

⁹¹ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 7763, f. 93^r, Ecchellen's account, together with Georgius Maronius, Maronite archbishop of Cyprus. The list of manuscripts is on ff. 89^{r-v}.

⁹² *BAV, BL*, Vol. 317, ff. 1^r–64^r. Ecchellen gives as his title: *Liber Directionis Regionum*.

Though Ecchellen's full manuscript never got to the stage of publication, in 1650 part of the Abu al-Fida 'Geography' was translated and published in London by the Englishman John Greaves as the *Chorasmiae et Mawarabnahrae (...) descriptio*, while such oriental scholars as the Dutchmen Thomas Erpenius and Jacob Golius and the Englishman Edward Pocock used it, too. A full edition was only published in the 19th century.

Ecchellen stayed in Paris till 1651, at last even occupying quarters in the building of the newly established Bibliothèque Royale.⁹³ But then a summons came from Rome. Once again, the cardinals of the Congregation of the Propaganda, now headed by Cardinal Capponi, had decided that Ecchellen's qualities were needed in the papal capital rather than in Paris; they may well have thought that a man of his experience might be better employed in the service of the pope—working for the Propagation of the Faith as well as spreading the fame of the Eternal City as a centre of learning—than in the service of the French king who, to many policy-makers at the Curia, did not exactly behave as the head of a state which prided itself on being the Church's obedient eldest 'son'. Consequently, Ecchellen was recalled to assist in the preparation of the Roman Arabic version of the Bible, as well as to act as interpreter for Arabic and Syriac.

Before leaving France on March 21, 1651, Ecchellen witnessed the publication of yet another result of his diligent research, the *Chronicon Orientale (...) cui accessit eiusdem supplementum Historiae orientalis*, a volume in folio—beautifully illustrated by the Royal Printing Office with engravings for the *incipit*-letters—apparently sponsored, once again, by Chancellor Seguier. Ecchellen tells his readers that he is on the brink of returning to Italy, which has made the writing of a long introduction impossible; however, the extensive notes give a great deal of information; they have been assembled from various manuscript sources, such as texts in the Royal Library, thanks to the friendship of the Du Puy-brothers, and in the libraries of Guilbert Gaulmain, Mazarin and Seguier, but they are based on data collected by Thevenot as well.

The text in question is a rather simple world chronicle, produced in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean, which takes history up to the Roman emperors, continuing with lists of the caliphs, the local rulers

⁹³ *ASR, FCF*, Vol. 64, f. 81r.

of Egypt and Syria, and the patriarchs of Alexandria. Ecchellen did not know the name of the author—we now know it was written in or around the year AD 1259 by Petrus Abu Shakir ibn Rahib Abu Karam ibn Muhaddib⁹⁴—but the manuscript had disclosed that he was an Egyptian Copt, a monk and a patriarch of Alexandria himself.

Up till 1626, the manuscript had been in the possession of a Maronite priest called Elias, from Ehden in Lebanon—probably the eponymous abbot of the order of St. Anthony, whom Ecchellen would have met in the early 1630's—, who had discovered and copied the text in Cairo. Ecchellen had purchased his copy and now gave the text to the world, with a quite specific purpose that, once again, neatly dovetails with his earlier ventures.

Europe, according to him, knows far too little about the Near East, a region that is of the utmost importance to it; the people of the Orient are seen as uncivilized, ignorant, even by such learned worthies as the late Joseph Justus Scaliger, who read a great number of Arabic texts but understood little ...⁹⁵

To redress this situation, Ecchellen accompanied his edition of the chronicle with a true work of his own, actually the first large-scale text he ever wrote, a *Historia Araborum ab eorum origine usque ad Pseudopropheta Mahometum (...) in duas divisa partes*. This, in fact, is a description of early Arab culture, especially in the fields of chronology and historiography, as well as a survey of pre-Islamic Arab religion and philosophy, obviously meant both to correct ideas and views created and spread by such orientalist as Scaliger, and to enlighten the European public about the value of Arab civilization, which existed in its own right despite being 'tainted' by Islam.

Back to Rome for the last time: 1651 and onwards

Ecchellen arrived in Rome on May 12, 1651. The Congregation of the Propaganda gave him 120 *scudi* a year for his job as interpreter and assistant, rather paltry in comparison to his lordly Parisian earnings, plus the promise of the chair of Arabic at the *Sapienza* on the

⁹⁴ Cfr. L. Cheikho (ed.), *Petrus ibn Rahib. Chronicon Orientale. Interpretationem olim ab Abrahami Ecchellensi institutam, tum a I.S.Assemano revisam, iterum ad fidem Arabici textus recognovit P.L. Cheikho* (Beirut-Paris-Leipzig 1903). On Rahib's authorship: VI.

⁹⁵ A. Ecchellen, *Chronicon Orientale, o.c.*, 275sqq.

retirement of the incumbent, Father Filippo Guadagnolo.⁹⁶ Perhaps Ecchellen complained, or else the authorities may have felt that something more rewarding was, indeed, called for: on March 5, 1652, the cardinals of the Propaganda decided to once again endow a chair of Syriac at the *Sapienza*, with Ecchellen as the new holder.

With this combination of tasks, the Maronite must have been quite fully occupied, but it did not keep him from his research, as became clear in 1653, when the famous Press of the Propaganda published his *Ope Domini Nostri Iesu Christi incipimus scribere Tractatum (...) auctore Hebediesu, metropolitae Sobiensi, Latinitate donatum et notis illustratum*. The work was dedicated to Cardinal Antonio Barberini, Chancellor of the Church, Cardinal-prefect of the Propaganda, Grand Almoner of France and Bishop of Poitiers. This choice, of course, had its political reasons, as always, but it was an appropriate one as well, because of Ecchellen's purpose with the publication of this particular text.

It all went back to a manuscript belonging to the Roman monastery of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, where the abbot, Don Hilarion Rancati, ranked as a competent oriental scholar as well as a patron of letters. He had drawn Ecchellen's attention to a list of Chaldean writers compiled, as Ecchellen wrongly thought, by a late 15th-century convert from Nestorianism to Christendom, one Hebediesu;⁹⁷ men like Leone Allacci, of the Vatican Library, and Giovanni Battista Maro, canon of Sant'Angelo in Pesceria had urged Ecchellen to edit and publish the text since it would serve an important goal, viz. to show the full extent of scholarly literature in Chaldean and Syriac that could support the appeal to tradition now necessary to Rome in its struggle against heretics and free thinkers.⁹⁸ Consultation of this corpus also would help to purge Greek and Latin texts of the many corrupted passages they contained. Finally, a better understanding of the Oriental scholarly production would show that however many the differences between the Roman and the Oriental Churches—differences that were constantly being magnified by the papacy's critics—there was, in the Near East, a region with its own culture, its own languages, and yet in fundamental union with Rome.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ On Guadagnolo: *ASR, FCF*, Vol. 64, ff. 64^v–66^r and 236^r–239^v.

⁹⁷ A. Ecchellen, *Ope Domini, o.c.*, 16–17; for the correct attribution: Graf, *o.c.* III, 357.

⁹⁸ *Idem*, 129sqq.

⁹⁹ *Idem*, 20–23.

Actually, Hebediesu's bibliography, to which Ecchellen added a number of titles by Arabic writers whom he deemed important, only seems to have been the excuse for a longish apologetic introduction and a series of very extensive notes, loosely connected to the listed items. Thus, there is a fifty-page discussion with such scholars as Arnold Boot and James Ussher on the origin of the vocalizing signs in Syriac, and the way this problem interferes with a proper reading and interpretation of the Syriac version of the Old Testament.¹⁰⁰

Clearly this reached back to the controversy between Ecchellen, Sionita and Flavigny, but also to the Maronite's efforts to strike at those heretics who tried to combat Rome by appropriating the Eastern tradition. Besides its other effects, this 1653-publication of Ecchellen's apparently did engender a debate among orientalists, for we find Ecchellen's old friend Jean Morin writing to him on such questions as whether in Hebrew and Samaritan vocalizing signs existed from the beginning, and whether the Arabs always used them as well. Another question of his was how Jewish women and children, not being schooled in grammar, ever could have read the sacred texts if they did not know the vocalizing rules? Would it be possible to use some verses of the Syriac Pentateuch—bought in 1629 by Nicholas de Peiresc from a Maronite monastery, soon to become one of the touchstone manuscripts for biblical scholarship¹⁰¹—to indicate what the actual pronunciation of words might have been?¹⁰² Ecchellen's answer, in which he entered into numerous grammatical details, took some nine months, not surprisingly, for from another source we know that his last publication had landed him in some quite unexpected troubles.¹⁰³

Apparently, the reigning Pope, Innocent X had taken umbrage at the way Ecchellen had mentioned Antonio Barberini's French connections, congratulating him on having been named grand almoner of France, and stressing his pastoral and fiercely anti-heretical activities in his see. The short of it was that Ecchellen was in disgrace and even considered returning to Paris. It is not clear what was the outcome of this episode, but in the end the Maronite scholar did not leave the Eternal City.

¹⁰⁰ *Idem*, 82–248.

¹⁰¹ See: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, *Mss. Fonds Français*, Vol. 9452, ff. 1^r–3^f. for the acquisition, as well as: Rietbergen, The making of a 'Syncretic Saint', a.c., passim.

¹⁰² *Antiquitates*, o.c., 422–423, Ecchellen to Morin, October 8, 1653.

¹⁰³ *Idem*, 446–448, Father René Goetzalde, S.J., from Rome, to Morin in Paris, April 20, 1654.

Ecchellen, the Vatican Library and European Oriental studies

When, in 1655, Innocent died and was succeeded by Cardinal Fabio Chigi, who assumed the papal name of Alexander VII (1655–1667), things in Rome began to change, at least in the field of culture.¹⁰⁴ In contrast to the previous pontiff, the new pope again was a patron of the arts and sciences on the grand scale, like Ecchellen's first Roman patron, Urban VIII, and his nephew Francesco Barberini.

Alexander's vision of a *Roma Restaurata* not only extended to grandiose building programs but also encompassed the world of learning. Actually, one of his major obsessions was the need to restore Rome to its erstwhile position as the leading intellectual centre of Europe, the capital not only of the Papal States and of the Christian world but also of the Republic of Letters.¹⁰⁵ Combating the heretics and all those who, within the Church, wished to detract from Rome's authority was his main policy aim, as it had been Ecchellen's ideal, too. This battle, of course, had to be waged on the field of scholarship, with the intellect and books as the chosen weapons. Hence the position of the papal university was considerably strengthened once more, the salaries of the professors were raised and publication facilities were created.

In this climate, Ecchellen started upon his last great work. His last, for another project, the publication of a *Biblioteca Orientalis, in qua non solum ingens recensetur Chaldeaorum, Syrorum et Arabum librorum copia, verum etiam eorum qui in hasce linguas sunt translati*, which he mentioned in his 1658-list for Carlo Cartari, never materialized. He planned to add the catalogue to a *Tractatus de Scriptoribus Orientalibus*, which should serve in the battle with the Occidental heretics. Yet, though a printed version was not realised, a manuscript catalogue survives.¹⁰⁶

However, the very fact that we now know this project did exist may, once again, underline Ecchellen's importance within the group of Maronite orientalists who, over two centuries, contributed so much to the establishment and growth of that field of scholarship in Western Europe. Surely it is not by chance that the enterprise which assured the immortality of that other great Maronite oriental scholar, Giuseppe

¹⁰⁴ Cfr. Rietbergen, *Pausen, o.c.* (Nijmegen 1983), chapter II.

¹⁰⁵ P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Papal Patronage and Propaganda. Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667), the Biblioteca Alessandrina and the Sapienza-complex', in: *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome*, New Series XV (1986), 157–177.

¹⁰⁶ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, 13200.

Simonio Assemani (1687–1768), was a *Biblioteca Orientalis* as well,¹⁰⁷ though it concentrated on the holdings of the Vatican Library instead of giving what, perhaps, even Ecchellen would not have been able to provide, a general survey of all works published in Near Eastern languages. However, even as a catalogue of the books and manuscripts in the papal collections, only, Assemani's *Biblioteca* could not have been compiled without recourse to the older Maronite's bibliographic and inventorying labours at the *Vaticana*.¹⁰⁸

For when Ecchellen had returned to Rome, he apparently felt that his future scholarly work in his chosen field inevitably would have to be based mainly upon the rich oriental holdings of the papal library. A catalogue of these treasures did not, however, exist, though books and manuscripts had been pouring in since the late 15th century, as the result of donations by successive popes, cardinal-librarians and other benefactors, but also as the outcome of the papal right of spoils, or via such exotic ways as the confiscation, by the papal inquisitor on Malta, of Turkish manuscripts captured by the Knights of St. John.¹⁰⁹

From the early decades of the 17th century onward, the Maronite orientalist in Rome had realized the importance of this collection, using it for their research and trying to get the library's management to employ one of them to ensure its proper safeguarding and making it available to the scholarly world.

The above-mentioned Abbot Vittorio Accurra, professor of Syriac at the *Sapienza* from 1610–1631 and, hence, though his chair had been abolished for some decades, Ecchellen's immediate predecessor and himself the author of a lengthy 'Defense of the Maronite Nation', had been working for the Vatican Library. So had the Maronite archbishop Sergio Rizzi who was sorting out the Syriac and Arabic manuscripts for his Syriac edition of the Bible, all the while coveting the as yet non-existent post of *scrittore* for Arabic and Syriac for his scholarly nephew Giuseppe Luna—Yusuf al-Hilali—as much as Accurra wanted it for himself.¹¹⁰

It seems that, from 1653 onwards, Ecchellen was continuing this cataloguing tradition, working on a provisional list of the Vatican's Near

¹⁰⁷ Giuseppe Simonio Assemani, *Biblioteca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana* (Rome 1719).

¹⁰⁸ *Ricerche*, *o.c.*, 26.

¹⁰⁹ E. Rossi, *Elenco dei Manoscritti Turchi della Biblioteca Vaticana* (Città del Vaticano 1953), X.

¹¹⁰ *Ricerche*, *o.c.*, 362sqq.

Eastern manuscripts. In 1658, this resulted in a rigidly thematic catalogue that was to remain the basis of future inventories.¹¹¹ The importance of Ecchellen's contribution to the proper functioning of the *Vaticana* as a great research library did not go unnoticed. Whether it was Pope Alexander himself who realized Professor Ecchellen's worth, or his nephew, the Cardinal-librarian Flavio Chigi, we do not know, but on May 21, 1660, Abraham Ecchellense was nominated to the newly-instituted position of *scrittore* for Arabic and Syriac at the *Biblioteca Vaticana*; it was a function complementing the six traditional ones already connected with the library, viz. the two *scrittorie* for Hebrew, Greek and Latin, respectively; its institution meant a clear recognition not only of the new nominee's personal merits but, one may say, of the importance of the Near East for the cultural history of the European-Christian world in general and the papacy in particular.

In his new function, Ecchellen soon was assisted by the three Nairone-brothers, Fausto, Giovanni Mattia and Nicola, members of the Nimruni-family, who were related to him through his wife.¹¹² For after his return to Rome in 1651, Ecchellen, probably realizing he had come to stay, had married, choosing one Constantia, the daughter of Michael ibn Nimrun, originally from the Lebanese village of al-Bani but since long settled in Rome. Constantia bore him four children, three sons and a daughter. It seems Ecchellen now became a prominent member of the Roman Maronite community, not least through the patronage he obviously enjoyed from a number of powerful friends and, indeed, from Alexander VII himself. Thus, one finds the Maronite patriarch in the Lebanon writing to him on several occasions, not only thanking him for intervening with the Pope in favour of the Maronite cause, but also for his charity towards needy fellow Maronites.¹¹³

Like Ecchellen, the Nimruni-brothers had been educated at the Maronite College in Rome, and now, in various ways, stepped into the tradition of oriental scholarship of their community. But while Fausto (1625–1712) was being groomed as Abraham's successor at the

¹¹¹ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 13200, f. 63sqq.

¹¹² The exact relationship between the Nairone-brothers and Constantia Ecchellen is unclear; they may either have been her brothers, or her cousins, as the name of Michael an-Nimruni al-Bani is given both of her father and of the father of the three brothers.

¹¹³ On Fausto, or rather Murhidj ibn Nimrun al-Bani, see: *Nouvelle Biographie Generale*, XXVII, 141–142. His scholarly production is not overwhelming, but he did publish a *Dissertatio de origine, nomine ac religione Maronitarum* (Rome 1679).

Sapienza,¹¹⁴ and young Nicola was employed as a copyist in the Vatican Library, it was Giovanni Mattia who began to act as Abraham's amanuensis and collaborator. Together, they tried to solve the problems created by the influx of books and manuscripts resulting from Ecchellen's successful efforts to get the oriental holdings of the Neophyte College in Rome transferred to the *Vaticana*.¹¹⁵

The descriptions of the 1658 Ecchellen-Nairone catalogue of Vatican Near Eastern manuscripts, which was the first result of this collaboration,¹¹⁶ show that at least in the fields of Arabic and Syriac the two were certainly among the leading scholars of their day—so much so that Assemani paraphrased their text almost *verbatim* in his own *Biblioteca Orientalis*; however, Coptic was not their strong point, and the Turkish section is rather weak as well.¹¹⁷

All this should not make us forget that Ecchellen's purpose was not a mere catalogue, but a research tool, to be used for his own and others' scholarly work, and more specifically for the last great book he was preparing, as well as for his projected *Biblioteca*.

In 1661, the Press of the Propaganda printed Ecchellen's last work, which had been in the making for some six or seven years.¹¹⁸ Actually, it consisted of two separate studies, often found bound together as their purpose was, in fact, the same. They were *Euty chius patriarcha Alexandrinus vindicatus et suis restitutus orientalibus, sive responsio ad Johannis Seldeni Origines, in duas tributa partes, quarum prima est De Alexandrina Ecclesia Originibus, altera De Origine Nominis Papae, quibus accedit Censura in Historiam Orientalem Johannis Henrici Hottingeri Tigurini, omnia ex orientalium excerpta Monumentis*. The book was dedicated to Alexander VII, quite properly so, I think, because the subject matter was as dear to him as it had been to Urban VIII: the defence of papal primacy against the onslaughts of the usual suspects, heretics and free thinkers; their attacks had become more frequent and violent in the late 1640s and the 1650s; they now were felt to form a real threat to Rome's

¹¹⁴ Ricerche, *o.c.*, 411, 415.

¹¹⁵ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 13.201.

¹¹⁶ Ricerche, *o.c.*, 26.

¹¹⁷ As is shown by letters from Ecchellen to Jean Morin: *Antiquitates, o.c.*, 449–470, 473–475, and 478–480, of July 13, 1654, January 11, 1655 and April 25, 1655, respectively.

¹¹⁸ On Euty chius and his works: L. Cheikho (ed.), *Euty chii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales* (Beirut 1906), which gives the Arabic text, as well as P. Cachin, K. Montgomery Watt (eds.), *Euty chius of Alexandria. The Book of the Demonstrations* (Louvain 1960–1961), Vols. I–II.

supremacy, the more acutely experienced by Alexander since Jansenism was spreading in the Low Countries and France, and Gallicanism was openly favoured by Louis XIV, with whom he was on far from amiable terms.

The dedication is a complicated and cunning verbal mixture of the allegorical elements used in visual propaganda during Alexander's pontificate—the mountains, the star and the oak of the Chigi coat-of-arms as the link between Heaven and Earth, between Divine Wisdom and its representative, the Church—and of Ecchellen's own obsession, the contribution of the Near East to European-Christian culture. It shows when the author addresses the Pope as follows: "*cedat igitur veritati mendacium; tuos montes adorent Sinai, Sion, Carmelus, caeteraque praeclara montium iuga; thura offerat Libanus, eiusque sublimae, ac incorruptae cedri, incorruptae fidei symbolum, vis immortalibus sese submittant quercibus*". The writers and wisdom of the Near East can help to defend the Roman tradition; the Maronites have honoured the primacy of the popes over the past eleven hundred years; in the end, the Chigi-star will prove to be a loadstar leading towards the cradle of Christ. This certainly was a neat introduction to Ecchellen's most extensive polemic ever.

In both studies, he attacks John Selden's (1584–1654) interpretation of two texts by Sa'id ibn al-Bitrik, also known as Euty chius, orthodox patriarch of Alexandria from AD 933 to 940.¹¹⁹ In each, Ecchellen gives the Arabic text, followed by Selden's Latin translation and his own version, and then goes on to comment on specific points and problems, which range from Selden's inadequate command of Arabic and his incorrect translations to his lack of knowledge of other, circumstantial evidence like a number of pertinent inscriptions on monuments in Alexandria, et cetera.

The reason behind the entire exercise was, of course, to disprove Selden's claims against the continuity between the patriarchate of Alexandria and the Roman papacy as the leading sees of the Christian world. To the discussion, Ecchellen brought an impressive array of manuscript sources that had provided him with his data, enumerating some 68 codices, of which a goodly fifteen were in his own possession.

¹¹⁹ Anaissi, *o.c.*, 127–128, a letter from the patriarch to Echellen, March 15, 1660.

Conclusion

With these rather lengthy apologetic studies, the list of Abraham Ecchellen's publications ends. Whether he continued working on the many projects that still were on his mind in 1658, we do not know. Still, the oeuvre as it stands shows a definite consistency, that marks Ecchellen as a major mediator between Mediterranean cultures who, at the same time, used his position to strengthen the power of Rome, of the papacy, precisely because he believed it to be the one uniting factor between these cultures.

He was educated in the culture of the Christian-Syrian-Arab world. It meant he was deeply attached to a religion that, though originating in his own region, now had its centre in Western Europe and was steeped in a civilisation that for long had disregarded its origins, looking upon the inhabitants of the Near East as the arch-enemies of Christendom, as people who were both infidels and barbarians. Ecchellen was greatly sensitive to the fact that the Christian part of the Near Eastern cultural complex was an integral component of Christianity as such, and may have felt that Christian civilization, precisely because of its growing Eurocentricity, had to be counterbalanced by re-introducing it to its roots; he also realized that the Arab-Islamic part of the Near Eastern cultural complex had preserved and developed a tradition of knowledge and scholarship that Christianity, and Christian-European culture could not let go unheeded.

Ecchellen's lifework aimed to bring about this re-introduction through making available to Europe some of the products of a culture that not only was its nearest neighbour but also, albeit partly, had grown from the same roots. Cultural diversity—Ecchellen never denied that many elements in the praxis of the Oriental churches differed considerably from the Roman canon—within fundamental theological unity would enable the Roman Catholic Church to stand strong against the waves of dissidence, heterodoxy and heresy.

Yet, one should also see Ecchellen's significance in another light. In his life and works he seems the personification of the Maronites, a group that, while trying to achieve a certain synthesis between the two dominant Mediterranean cultures, the (Christian-)European and the (Islamic-)Arab, was at the same time torn between them. Even in the 21st century, a synthesis as visualised by Ecchellen may remain a dream only, as seems to be shown by the history of Abraham's very own Lebanon.

Abraham Ecchellen died on July 15, 1664. Even if no monument to his memory was erected in Rome—though in Paris his name adorns the façade of the Mazarin's proud foundation, the Collège Royal—his work was continued. His nephew, Fausto Nairone, immediately wrote to the then grand duke of Tuscany as the head of the family who had always taken care of the Maronites in general, and of Abraham in particular;¹²⁰ he requested Grand Duke Leopold to recommend his brother Giovanni Mattia for the succession to Abraham's function as *scrittore* at the Vatican Library, while asking for himself the professorship at the *Sapienza*; whether or not through grandducal intercession, both wishes were granted by Pope Alexander,¹²¹ who, two years later, also selected Fausto as first custodian of his newly-established university library, the *Biblioteca Alessandrina*, especially charged with the care of its oriental holdings.¹²² Meanwhile Ecchellen's own manuscripts had entered the *Vaticana*, there to remain a separate collection till in the 18th century all Oriental *fondi* were united by Assemani; as indicated above, in compiling the catalogue of the new *fondo*, he heavily relied on the previous, Ecchellen-Nairone inventories.¹²³ Thus, Ecchellen indirectly helped organize and open up to the scholarly community one of the most important European repositories of Near-Eastern manuscripts.

Ecchellen's scholarly merits were made clear for the last time in a work published, on the wishes of his one-time patron, Francesco Barberini, in 1682. The *Antiquitates Ecclesiae Orientalis* brought together a great many letters exchanged by some dozen scholars from all over Europe who, between 1628 and 1651, had corresponded on topics relating to the study of Eastern Christianity—with each other and with Barberini, who, in many ways, had facilitated their work. Among such of his peers as, e.g. Leone Allacci, Jean Morin and Pietro della Valle, Abraham Ecchellen stands out conspicuously as a man who, at a time that Europe was entering a phase wherein growing 'Orientalism', now to be defined as a taste for the merely exotic, went hand in hand with a growing disdain for the very cultures that he, while standing in the Christian Maronite tradition, yet had sought to bring closer to the European mind.

¹²⁰ The letter was printed in: A. Fabroni, ed., *Lettere inedite di uomini illustri*, Vol. II (Firenze 1775), 147–149.

¹²¹ *Ricerche*, *o.c.*, 6, note 3.

¹²² P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Creating a University Library: Pope Alexander VII and the Biblioteca Alessandrina', in: *The Journal of Library History* 22/2 (1987), 190–205.

¹²³ *Ricerche*, *o.c.*, 27.

CHAPTER EIGHT

URBAN VIII BETWEEN WHITE MAGIC AND BLACK MAGIC, OR: HOLY AND UNHOLY POWER

Introduction. Three episodes

It is summer 1628. Somewhere in his private apartments in the Quirinal Palace on Monte Cavallo, where the air is less oppressive than in the Vatican, Pope Urban confers with a man recently released from the prison of the Congregation of the Holy Office in Naples, where he had spent many years on suspicion of heresy and witchcraft. Now, this man, the Calabrian friar-philosopher Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) is casting the pope’s horoscope, having been asked to do so by the supreme pontiff himself. How had this strange situation arisen?

Urban is ill. He is afraid he will die. The heavenly signs are against him. Solar eclipses have occurred. Can he somehow alter his fate? His fear is aggravated because he knows people out there, in his town, are speculating on the possibility, laying wagers, as they so love to do. Many wish him dead. The poor, who always think that a new pope may, perhaps, be less exacting than his predecessors: for some decades, already, each succeeding pope has raised the taxes, while the Italian economy is in a bad shape and the common man has to tighten his belt. The city magistrates are waiting for him to die, too, hoping a “Sede vacante” will give them a chance to exercise some real power again.¹ And some of the cardinals, of course, those whom Urban calls his ‘Brethren in Christ’: they may well be praying for his speedy demise as well, since at least one of them is certain to ascend the papal throne as his successor. Hence, rumour and expectations run high, both among the populace and the elite. Already, lists are being compiled of those who are considered “papabile”, because they can muster some support, either from one or more Christian princes, or from the various factions within the Curia itself.

¹ On this topic: the Prologue of this book, as well as: Laurie Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton 1992).

Monday, April 13, 1630. An anonymous reporter sits down to record his impressions of the past day. On Campo de'Fiori a priest, who had been solemnly defrocked the day before, has been hung and his books have been burned. The spectators waited till his neck broke. With him, six other men have been condemned, too; they, however, to long periods of service on the papal galleys—a less speedy but yet almost certain death. The Roman public had a heyday. A few hours later, a woman, dressed in something resembling a nun's habit had been chased out of town, tied to an ass. When she had acted out this symbolic penance, her real punishment began: ten years in the prison of the Congregation of the Holy Office. Another observer, Giacinto Gigli, noted in his diary that she was immured after her ride, and died two days later.

Why were these people thus treated? The woman, not a nun proper but a lay-religious person, had been the priest's accomplice in several unspeakable acts, involving obviously 'black' magic, unholy power exercised by him and by his accomplices.²

Saturday, April 22, 1635. Count Giacinto Centini, incarcerated in the prisons of the Corte Savella, is writing to his wife along the following lines.³ Having shed the blood of innocent Christians, he accepts his proud head will have to fall. In his mind's eye, he embraces his wife and their children. He trusts that his faithful consort, with her customary presence of mind, will take care of the family's affairs and, with her sweet ways, will lighten the bitter misery of all concerned. She should write to his uncle, Cardinal Felice Centini, and ask for his support. He himself has forfeited any right to it. He hopes to yet receive God's mercy. One more embrace.

Two days later, his head did indeed fall on Campo de'Fiori. Why did Centini have to die? He had been found guilty of the heaviest of crimes. With the help of six priests, he had tried to murder the Pope by magical means. Magic—white or black, 'accepted' by the Church or vehemently rejected by it—was an essential part of Roman Baroque culture.

² *BAV, Manoscritti Ottoboniani Latini (Ottob. Lat.)*, Vol. 337/II, f. 172^r. Yet, it must refer to the same event which Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, dates June 8 and 9, 1630. But Gigli was not always reliable in dating the notes in his diary.

³ *BAV, Ottob. Lat.*, Vol. 2441, f. 214^{r-v}.

Fear and violence in Baroque Rome

Baroque Rome was a violent and a fearful city—as violent as any present-day metropolis, but maybe rather more fearful.

Though some people argue the opposite, I feel that violence is bred by constraint and fear.

The constraints set upon emotions and behaviour by the rules of Rome were severe indeed. Perhaps in consequence thereof, the sources that tell us about Roman life in the late 16th and early 17th century abound with fratricide, matricide and uxoricide, as well as with simple homicide. Indeed, veritable orgies of violence occurred.

In the 1580s, Paolo Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, of an old Roman line, after having murdered his wife, took Vittoria Accoramboni to his bed and had her husband murdered with the help of her brother. While he himself died from the poison administered to him by his former wife's brother, his paramour finally fell at the hands of his own brother, who had pledged to save the family's honour.

At the end of the 1590s, in the sombre Cenci-palace in the centre of town, hatred had poisoned the relations in an aristocratic family of father, stepmother, daughter and brother, resulting in the daughter, Beatrice, and her stepmother murdering their father and husband. Both cases have excited painters, musicians and novelists through the ages—about Vittoria Accoramboni, John Webster wrote his play *The White Devil* in 1612, Stendhal his eponymous short story in 1837, and Ludwig Tieck his novel in 1840; while, in 1820, J.B. Shelley published his *The Cenci*, and Stendhal, who had a penchant for these gruesome tales, wrote *Les Cenci* in 1827.

In the 17th century, things continued,⁴ beginning with multiple murder in the proud Massimo-family and ending with Pompilia Comparini and her family dying at the hand of Guido Franceschini, the noble husband to whom she had been sold by her parents, a tragedy immortalised in Robert Browning's poem *The Ring and the Book*. All this was aristocratic violence, sometimes explained as the emotional reaction of an elite who, as it felt power slipping from their hands because a centralizing government took control, felt challenged to find out how far they still could go with impunity. It also may be interpreted as the violence that resulted from a culture in which to preserve 'face', honour,

⁴ A long list of "Delitti seguiti et altro nel Pontificato di Urbano VIII" is in: *BAV Mss. Urbinateensi Latini*, Vol. 1646, fols. 26^r–144^r, included in Sauli's life of the Pope.

was all-important, and where that face was the face of one's family rather than of oneself and where, consequently, the fear of public shame stifled private emotional life.

But the diary of a simple Roman citizen like Giacinto Gigli is full of anonymous people involved in all kinds of violence as well. Moreover, reading the weekly *avvisi*, it is obvious the reporters were used to seeing people die in the streets, stabbed with a knife, killed by a sword; nor were they surprised to find that poison was used within households to get rid of those members of the family who stood in the way of fortune or happiness. Yet, of course people were afraid to face the consequences of their actions, for manslaughter was severely punished; if by invoking the cooperation of the forces of the nether world, they could somehow reach their goal undetected, or with impunity, they were quite willing to do so, even though this evidently 'black' magic, if detected, might incur the wrath of the Church.

The fears that beset the life of Romans as well as other Europeans of the time were manifold indeed. Life was harsh. Often, food would be in short supply, and people died from starvation or at least from the effects of malnourishment. Such a gruesome case as the one of the two Roman butchers who, in 1638, were beheaded and quartered because they had sold pork mixed with human flesh may have been connected with food shortage as well.⁵ Also, epidemics raged all over Europe with frightening regularity, and the Papal States, too, were ravaged several times during the early decades of the 17th century. Moreover, illnesses, if they occurred, often were incurable though doctors, relying on bleeding more than on any other treatment, pretended otherwise. In short, death was all too near. Painful death, or violent death, or a combination of the two. It was to escape from these fears, too, that people turned to magic, to forces unknown. For the universe was full of unexplainable things shown by signs in heaven and on earth.

In Rome, these forces perhaps were felt to be somehow more present and hence easier contacted than elsewhere. For this was a city of secrets, of wonders. In his diary, Gigli documented both the glorious and the gruesome ones, telling about the prodigies and monsters that appeared everywhere, even in one's own neighbourhood: he writes about women giving birth to small abominations not even the parish priest wanted to baptize but also about the marvellous miracles, the

⁵ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, 13658, fols. 346–355.

‘white’ magic, or holy power accompanying the discovery of the body of St. Francesca Romana in 1638.⁶

But the secrets, the wonders also ‘lived’ in the previous manifestations of this many-layered town. While each spade set in the ground to lay the foundations of a house, a palace, a church, might uncover the body of a saint, it almost certainly would also reveal a more pagan subterranean Rome, consisting of stratum upon stratum of strange buildings, decorated, sometimes, with frightening frescoes and wondrous statues. Also, once one set foot outside the small, essentially medieval centre in the bent of the Tiber—where most Romans lived and that was only slowly being enlarged in the course of the 16th and early 17th century—the built city petered out in the vast, still largely empty area surrounded by the huge Aurelian walls. The grand map of Rome published by the engraver Giovanni Maggi in 1625 as a conscious contribution to the self-glorification of ‘The Town’ during the Universal Jubilee Pope Urban had decreed for that year, cannot hide the fact.⁷ It was an area dotted with vegetable gardens, orchards and vineyards, but also with massive piles of old masonry, partially collapsed, covered with bushes run wild, ruins that were the lair of robbers and murderers, and, perhaps, worse. For while the ancient monuments were proudly viewed as the testimonies of a glorious past that had known great power and strength, at the same time they were conceived as places of magic. Especially the Colosseum was looked upon as an enclosure of demons and devils.⁸

In this context one should read one of the many fascinating pages written by Benvenuto Cellini, like Gigli an assiduous recorder of Roman life. Never one to let the occasion for telling a sensational story pass by, he recounts his nightly visit to the Colosseum, where, on his own request, a wayward priest involves him in an experience that yet proves rather unsettling: as the pentacle quivers above a youth lying naked in the theatre’s ruined precinct, demons appear that can hardly be constrained. Though, in his autobiography, Cellini tries hard to make light of the experiment, he does not care to repeat it.⁹

⁶ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 118; 307, 309–311.

⁷ The map has been published in small sections by: St. Borsi, *Roma di Urbano VIII. La Pianta di Giovanni Maggi, 1625* (Rome 1990).

⁸ F. Cardini, ‘I diavoli al Colosseo’, in: F. Troncarelli, ed., *La Città dei Segreti. Magia, astrologia e cultura esoterica a Roma (Sec. XV–XVIII)* (Milan 1985), 43–54. Cfr. C. Gatto Trocchi, *Leggende e racconti popolari di Roma* (Rome 1982).

⁹ G. Bull, transl., ed., *Benvenuto Cellini, Autobiography* (Harmondsworth 1956), 120–124.

Devotion and superstition in Baroque Rome

For centuries, Christian theologians had denounced all kinds of magic and, especially, the faith in the stars as grave sins, contravening the essential Christian doctrine of God's omnipotence and his most precious gift to man, free will. But in the 16th and 17th century, that was learned theology. Even in its reinforced Tridentine version, it did not become the way most inhabitants of papal Rome thought. Nor did they act accordingly. Given the fact that official religion proposed life's meaning as a mystery, it could easily walk side by side with the vision of the starry system proposed as a book to be read for the revelation of life's secrets. For many, magic rites and devotional rites simply were one and the same repertoire of exorcising possibilities, proceeding from an equally simple, unconsciously syncretic state of mind.¹⁰

Arguably, devotion and superstition were expressions of the same culture, in which man tried to cope with the inconsistencies, the insecurities and, ultimately, the mysteries of life through various forms of religion. He would turn both to the one exercised by the official Church and to the others, traditions often of equally long standing. Emarginated, or, at times, condemned as heretical by the power of the ruling ecclesiastical elite, these religious manifestations yet held equal power over the minds of many.¹¹ Official religion and its ideology—expressed in the difficult language that was theology—was barely understood by the masses, if at all. But priests there were, and things happened which one did not understand. If the official priests could or would not make sense of them, why not ask the unofficial ones, be they, sometimes, one and the same person.¹² Magic, as much as theology, could serve as the most 'rational' explanation of the irrational that happened every day. Sorcerers could be sacerdotess, and vice versa.¹³

In need of comfort, people asked their priests for help. Using a variety of images, languages, the latter tried to formulate answers.

¹⁰ For the background: M. Petrocchi, *Esorcismi e magia nell'Italia del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Naples 1957), as well as: C. Russo, *Società, Chiesa e Vita religiosa nell'Antico Régime* (Naples 1976).

¹¹ A fundamental essay, to which the following is much indebted, is: L. Fiorani, 'Astrologi, superstiziosi e devoti nella società Romana del Seicento', in: *Ricerca per la Storia Religiosa di Roma*, II (1978), 97–162, that centers around the Morandi-case.

¹² On priests as magicians: J. Delumeau, *Le Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire* (Paris 1971).

¹³ M. O'Neill, 'Sacerdote ovvero strione', in: S. Kaplan, ed., *Understanding popular culture* (Berlin 1984).

A fusion of traditions, of means was inevitable. And confusion was inevitable. Sermons and devotional tracts certainly did not always speak a language of simple hope and of celestial joy. They voiced threats and alluded to fears that to the ear of the simple, the illiterate, though not only to theirs, could as easily belong to the world of God as to that of the Devil. The Devil was there, tempting man—in the *Vita* of Suor Francesca Farnese, the spiritual guide of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, he often turns up. But though she knew he represented fear, whereas a Christian should aspire to hope, many could not so easily avoid his power, for to many the very essence of their life was fear, and death, the Devil, was just around the corner, in a city of poverty, hunger and illness.

Indeed, confusion was inevitable. The magical world used the images of saints, the blessed water and the oil, to acquire power, just like the Church used them. In fact, the two liturgies, the official one and the clandestine one, were almost indistinguishable, if only because, so often, the men and women participating in unholy masses daily attended the holy ones as well. The same Fra Bartolomeo Cambi da Saluthio (1557–1617) who was a fervent anti-magical sermonizer in Rome during the first decades of the 17th century, and whose *Opere spirituali*, posthumously published, were dedicated to Francesco Barberini,¹⁴ could advise a noble lady whose son was ill to take some oil from a lamp burning before the Sacrament or the image of the Virgin, express her belief, and apply it to those parts of her son's body that hurt most. Faith would do the rest.¹⁵

Admittedly, if one takes stock of the amount of miracles recorded in Gigli's *Diario* and attributed to the saints, one is struck by the fact that most occurred in the houses of the poor. So, perhaps, did the miracles worked by the spirits people did not dare mention for fear of the power of the Church and its inquisitors. And yet, in the palaces of the rich, too, miracles were prayed for and reported, as shows the case of Saint Philip Neri resurrecting one of the Massimo-siblings, born into one of Rome's most ancient and influential noble families.

Also, the language of the Church as directed at the majority of its flock, was emotive rather than intellectual. At least partly, the devotion and piety fostered by so many treatises and images and practices was ultimately founded in theological and mystical traditions of

¹⁴ Bartolomeo da Saluthio, *Opere spirituali* (Venice 1639).

¹⁵ *Opere spirituali*, *o.c.*, Vol. II, 391.

great importance. Yet as presented on the popular level it was difficult to distinguish between these sanctioned images and the ones induced by man's fantasy, which were less transcendental than the authorities thought acceptable. If God, the angels and the saints were presented almost as part of this world—the finer points of the discussions about the 'literalness' of the image, as exemplified, for example, in the case of the Bare Feet of St. Augustine surely must have escaped the larger part of the public¹⁶—one might as well ask them for a miracle, for an act of magic connected with the sorrows of this world, as for a rather abstract salvation in that unreal other one. Protection and help were offered, both in chapels and churches and in secret conventicles. Why should one not accept them both?

In a society where only a minority could read, and where images, illustrated stories abounded, especially the saints seemed to offer a many-layered response to the questions of the faithful. Indeed, they gave man a daily ration of identification and heroism that in later times was provided by other media, like 19th-century popular drama or the 20th-century soap-opera: identification with their suffering, and heroism in the way they overcame the limits of their existence. It was considered legitimate religiosity and, consequently, fed by their visual omnipresence in 'The Town'. Fed, also, by their relics, that assured their actual, corporeal power. If one were powerful as the Barberini were, one amassed the manifestation of saints in one's palace: indeed, I was quite surprised to find all Barberini dwellings were positively stacked with reliquaries holding bits and pieces of a great many martyrs and saints. But precisely these relics often came from the same 'subterranean Rome' that yielded other magical material as well. Though not added by the Church to the repertory of its official paraphernalia, might not that material be equally powerful?

Urban and his stars

Even in his own days, the Dominican friar Tommaso Campanella had made quite a name for himself, already. A visionary with a decidedly remarkable ego, he had written a number of texts of a philosophical-speculative nature which, though some of them only were published

¹⁶ See Chapter V of this book.

in the later years of his life, circulated widely in either printed or manuscript form and ensured his fame in circles of scholars and scientists. At the same time, they brought him under the almost constant surveillance of the ecclesiastical authorities, who suspected him of heresy, if not worse. One of the reasons for their suspicion was the fact that he also dabbled in astrology, for example while trying to raise a revolution against the Spaniards in his native Calabria, in 1599.

Repeatedly resisting torture during his many trials, he finally feigned madness. Though escaping death at the stake, in 1602 he was incarcerated for life.¹⁷ Yet, while in the Spanish Inquisition's prison in Naples, he completed the first six books of his *Astrologia*. 'The whole world lives according to a common meaning', he wrote, revealing his cosmic sensibility in which the stars gave the indications of that meaning.¹⁸

After a *volte-face* towards the Spaniards, he was released from prison in 1626, but immediately seized by the papal nuncio and transferred to the papal Inquisition's cells in Rome. However, from 1627 onwards, he was given increased freedom by Urban who sought the cooperation of this undoubtedly learned monk who, also, proved a kindred spirit in astrological matters, in the preparation of a commentaried edition of his poems. In these commentaries, Campanella showed great insight in the papal self-image, cleverly playing on the Pope's vanities and proclivities, both poetical and political. The first volume of the commentaries was ready by the end of 1628. Also, Campanella provided the ideological and actually astrological design for Sacchi's great ceiling fresco in the main hall of the new Barberini-palace.¹⁹ Consequently, when, also in 1628, Urban began to feel ill and insecure, he consulted the Dominican friar on what he considered a matter of life and death, viz. the question whether the course of the stars could be so altered as to prevent his imminent demise.

¹⁷ L. Amabile, *Fra Tommaso Campanella, la sua congiura, i suoi processi e la sua pazzia. Narrazione con molti documenti inediti politici e giudiziarii, con l'intero processo di eresia e 67 poesie di fra Tommaso finoggi ignorate* (Napoli 1882).

¹⁸ From: Th. Campanella, *De sensu rerum*, cited by: E. Garin, *Storia della filosofia italiana*, II (Turin 1966), 835. L. Firpo, *Ricerche campanelliane* (Firenze 1947), ch. V, 'Campanella astrologo', 137–173. Cfr. D.P. Walker, *Spiritual and demonic magic from Ficino to Campanella* [= Studies of the Warburg Institute, 22], (London 1958), cited as: Walker, *Magic, o.c.* Also: E. Garin, *Lo zodiaco della vita. La polemica sull'astrologia dal trecento al Cinquecento* (Bari 1976).

¹⁹ J.B. Scott, *Images of Nepotism. The Painted Ceilings of Palazzo Barberini* (Princeton 1991), 88–94.

Dressed in white robes, the two men retreated to a closed room in the Quirinal where the scene had been set to resemble Heaven. Seven torches had been lit and aromas and perfumes were burned.²⁰ Music was played as well. Though we do not know by whom and to what tune, apparently it was done in such a way that the planets favourable to Urban's longevity, Jupiter and Venus, would be attracted while Mars and Saturn, the adverse forces, would be repelled. One might even think it must have been vocal music, for the musicologists of the cultural circles frequented by Urban and Campanella, and, indeed, Campanella himself not only held that sung words communicated a moral message that aroused emotions in the audience but also that such song was part of the natural, celestial magic; it mirrored the order of the Heavens and could influence the influences of the planets and the stars.²¹

Campanella's use of music was, in a way, rather more practical than theoretical, and did not resemble the ideas of his most important teacher, the neo-Platonist philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), or such contemporary theories as Johannes Kepler's (1571–1630). The latter two somehow stipulated a mathematical relationship between the system of music and the system of the cosmos, in Ficino's case based largely upon the Asklepios-text of the Hermetic canon,²² while, in Kepler's case, it referred to the causal connection between the two polyphonic systems through their geometrical archetypes.²³ Campanella, however, did not see any identity of proportions between musical sounds and the heavens. Though the famous French musical theorist Father Marin Mersenne (1588–1648)—a mathematician specialising in primes who related his research to the 'harmony of the universe'—reportedly remarked that Campanella would not recognise an octave when he heard it, the friar believed in the physical reactions produced by sounds: these put the listener in a suitable state to receive favourable planetary influences, in the same way as the significance of

²⁰ The session has been analyzed, at least partly, by: Walker, *Magic*, *o.c.*, 207–208.

²¹ G. Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others* (Chicago 1992).

²² Cfr. A. Voss, *Magic, astrology and music. The background to Marsilio Ficino's astrological music therapy and his role as a renaissance magus*, Ph-D thesis, City University of London, 1992.

²³ D.P. Walker, *Studies in Musical Science in the late Renaissance* (London 1978), 62. But, more insightful: R. Martens, *Kepler's philosophy and the new astronomy* (Princeton 2000).

(sung) words, rather than their spoken sound or, for that matter, the metre of poetry, was supposed to have healing properties.²⁴

Now, such musical ideas as Campanella's were not new to Urban. Already in the booklet that accompanied the engravings depicting the ephemeral decorations installed for the procession of the Pope's *possesso* in 1624, his ideologue Mascardi had written that the harmony of voices and instruments which had been heard on that occasion had represented the harmony of the virtues emanating from Urban's well-disciplined soul.²⁵ No wonder the Pope believed the negative influences that now threatened to destroy his harmony could be influenced with the sound of specifically-composed music. Quite probably, Campanella devised the 1628-ritual especially to suit Urban's case; indeed, his references to it do not occur in any of his pre-1628 astrological publications, but are included in the revised, 1637-edition of the *Città del Sole*, his great utopian text, wherein they are presented as a major ceremony of the city's inhabitants.²⁶

But what was the result of the 1628-session? Let us only say that Urban continued to live for another fifteen years. And yet, his life continued to be in danger.

The abbot of Santa Prassede and the vicar of San Carlo

In the Roman monastery of Sta Prassede, the Florentine Orazio Morandi (ca. 1570–1630) had risen to the position of abbot. Educated in the neo-Platonist, Hermetic culture of late 16th-century Florence, and, moreover, a friend of, among others, Galilei's, Morandi was reputed to be a learned man, a philosopher and a theologian. His library showed his real interests within that wide and often ill-defined field, which definitely centred around astronomy and astrology.

With his background, Morandi easily attracted the friendship of many Roman intellectuals, among whom the Dominican Niccolò Riccardi, Master of the Sacred Palace, Rome's chief censor, a man who could make or break an author by giving or withholding permission for the publication of a text.

²⁴ Walker, *Magic*, *o.c.*, 230–236.

²⁵ Mascardi, *Pompe*, *o.c.*, 22.

²⁶ Walker, *Magic*, *o.c.*, 209.

At dinner, with such luminaries as Galilei sometimes present, people often discussed the works and ideas of Copernicus and Kepler, but conversation also would turn to Morandi's own favourite topics. The abbot himself would oblige with prognostications about the death of various people based on the day and time of their birth in relation to the constellation of the stars. Though widespread, it was practising this pastime that, in the end, resulted in his imprisonment at the hands of the Inquisition and in the ensuing court case.

As the witnesses who appeared before the judges of the Inquisition declared, many Romans, both high-born and low, regularly visited Morandi to be counselled by him as to the appropriate course of action or non-action they should take, either in business or politics or in their emotional life.²⁷ Though it might be frowned upon in certain circles, all this activity was not shrouded in great secrecy. Yet, Morandi must have known there were limits to what, with impunity, he might do or say in this field. Therefore, the question remains why, in 1628, he had chosen to convene a number of his high-born and high-placed friends to discuss the future of some members of the Barberini family and even of the Pope himself. Casting the Pope's horoscope, he arrived at the conclusion Urban would die in february, 1630. Why he then decided to inform the Spanish government of his findings is even less clear. He may have reasoned that the powers in Madrid, who certainly were no friends of Urban's, whom they considered dangerously pro-French, would be willing to reward him; perhaps, even, fearing that his occult activities, which were becoming all too widely-known, would soon incur the Pope's wrath, he decided to strike pre-emptively. Nevertheless, he was mistaken, for precisely the political consequences of his predictions soon proved decidedly disadvantageous to his own fate.

First, diplomatic circles reacted to the news of Urban's death, which caused a number of cardinals to hastily depart for Rome to be present when a conclave would be convened. However, other, more disturbing things happened as well. In these very months, the activities had been discovered of the rector of the church of San Carlo al Corso, a priest from Bologna who had a flourishing practice as a confessor and enjoyed the trust and esteem of many cardinals. But he had been known as a necromancer as well. One of his followers was a secular

²⁷ The dossier of Morandi's process has been preserved in: *Archivio di Stato di Roma, Fondo Tribunale del Governatore, Processi*, 1630, n. 251. It has been analysed by Bertolotti, *o.c.*, and by Fiorani, *o.c.*, 99–112.

nun, whom he had convinced she was a saint. He also had made her see visions, wherein she visited Heaven and dined with St. Peter. At one time, he had celebrated the Eucharist on her naked belly, using incense and all other liturgical paraphernalia. During his process, it also became clear that he had allowed many people who had confessed to him, male and female, to indulge in sins of the flesh. Worse, however, was that he had declared he would be made a cardinal by the pope who was to succeed Urban. Worst, of course, was that he had even named the next pope, his fellow citizen from Bologna, Cardinal Domenico Ginnasi, thus denying the fundamental action of the Holy Spirit in the election of the Roman pontiff. When he was taken prisoner, many books of necromancy and a wax statuette of Pope Urban were found among his possessions.

During the hearings of the Inquisition, it also became evident that a whole group of priests and friars were involved, who celebrated black masses both in Town and in the surrounding villages. Employing all sorts of magic, they also slept with various women at the same time. When the inquisitors had reached their decision, this group was led into St. Peter's to publicly abjure their crimes. The main culprit was hung on Campo de' Fiori.²⁸

With such a variety of scandals seemingly springing from the Morandi prognostications, Urban obviously could not tolerate the Abbot himself to go unpunished. In July 1630, he ordered Morandi's imprisonment. When Morandi's papers were searched, evidence was found of a network of contacts in which astrological advice was being distributed all over Italy. Soon, the actual extent of Morandi's circle of friends became clear as well, and the judges could not but note that many involved belonged to the Curia, and to famous monasteries; among them, there were medical doctors and theologians, friars and lawyers. Meanwhile, Morandi, on being interrogated, admitted he had found that many accidents could not be divined, as he had told his clients, 'but only studied after they had actually happened'.²⁹ Apparently, the new critical, empirical spirit was there, at the same time as the old belief in a possibility to foresee—and alter?—the future.

This partial retraction, whether faked or not, did not help Morandi. Urban wanted to have the whole episode dealt with and forgotten as soon as possible. Fate helped. In October 1630, the Abbot of Santa

²⁸ The whole episode in: Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 192–193.

²⁹ Bertolotti, *o.c.*, 20.

Prassede died in prison. Gigli wrote that poisoning was suspected, but a doctor declared that no traces were found; however, the story was likely enough, according to Gigli, because Morandi's religious brethren of the Vallombrosa Order would rather have him die this way than face their community's public disgrace when he, too, would be executed on Campo de'Fiori.³⁰

How to murder a pope?

The death of Giacinto Centini in consequence of a verdict established by the six cardinals who made up the Congregation of the Holy Office was determined in their last meeting in the convent of Sta Maria sopra Minerva, on the morning of Saturday, April 21, 1635. It concluded a case that had been dragging on for three or perhaps even four years. The meeting lasted for five hours.

It is difficult to reconstruct what actually happened. The court records of the Inquisition, to give the Congregation its more popular name, are only now being opened to researchers; however, a lot of material is lost, if only because, especially in cases concerning black magic, the papers were burned immediately after the verdict had been reached.³¹ Moreover, the verdicts themselves were not supposed to contain too detailed a description of the nefarious practices used, for fear of instilling the wrong ideas in those who were present at their public reading. But if, on Sunday, April 22, we would have joined the some 20,000 Romans who gathered in St. Peter's as well as in the open space that was not then a paved piazza, yet, we would have been told what the cardinals did want us to know.

In the huge church, which only recently had been completed after more than a century of building activities, a stage had been built against one of the dome's massive pillars. To that stage, the eight prisoners tried and convicted for their involvement in the plot to murder Pope Urban now were brought, Centini first, each afoot, each chained, each accompanied by two *sbirri*, the policemen of the governor of Rome. The first three entered without a lighted candle. Thus, the public knew they had been given the death penalty.

³⁰ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 198; Bertolotti, *o.c.*, 35.

³¹ J. Tedeschi, 'La dispersione degli Archivi della Inquisizione Romana', in: *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa*, 2 (1973), 298–312.

When they, eight criminals, had been ranged in full view of the crowd, a monk, clad in black, ascended the pulpit. Singing—which, perhaps, should be interpreted as reciting in a ringing bass voice,³² obviously because the Church wanted to ensure that this was not a spectacle, only, but that people would know why this ceremony was staged—he first addressed the main culprit with a summary of the accusation and the verdict, beginning: ‘You, Count Giovanni Centini...’

During the following three hours, as the verdicts were read, a complicated and dramatic story unfolded that has been preserved in a number of manuscript texts. There are two, only, that seem eyewitness accounts, or at least are written to give that impression. One of them is a lively tale of the abjuration-ceremony in St. Peter’s, but very short on background information;³³ most texts follow this one’s main argument, though differing from it and from each other in small but revealing details.³⁴ The other has considerable more particularities concerning the process itself, almost as if the author had been given access to the court records.³⁵ Despite what has been said above, this is not entirely improbable. First of all, it was always difficult to keep a secret in Rome. Secondly, one might suspect that the Pope, being closely involved in the case, did not want to be accused of partiality, especially as the verdict was definitely harsh. Maybe he had intimated that details about the Congregation’s sessions might be leaked, so as to make clear that the evidence was absolutely damning and, hence, the punishment, though strict, entirely just. On the basis of all these texts, it is possible to reconstruct and interpret the case.

Sometime in the 1620’s, one Diego Gucciolone, born around 1585, an Augustinian friar hailing from Palermo, had to flee Sicily because of his criminal practices, apparently including witchcraft. He went to Spain but there, too, soon engaged in necromancy, and consequently was prosecuted by the Inquisition. Seeking refuge in Portugal, he offered

³² *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 8891, f. 108v: “e da un musico basso concolto in un vicino pulpito ad alta voce gli fu letto il sommario”.

³³ *BAV, Ottob. Lat.*, Vol. 2441, fols. 215^r–233^r.

³⁴ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 13399, fols. 145–153; Vol. 13658, fols. 97–119; *Urb. Lat.*, Vol. 1690, fols. 181–184; Vol. 1704, fols. 321^r–338^v; Vol. 1737; *BL*, Vol. 5319, fols. 144–155. A few of these documents have been published in various Italian periodicals during the 19th century. I have used the originals, and will refer to them.

³⁵ This is the text edited by: M. Rosi, ‘La congiura di Giacinto Centini contro Urbano VIII’, in: *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, XXII (1899), 347–370. He says it is from the Barberini manuscripts. There, however, it cannot be found anymore.

his services as chaplain to the fleet that sailed to the Indies. Returning after six years, he came back to Italy and, under false pretences, began a new life, now as a travelling Augustinian friar, giving his name as Fra Bernardo di Montalto. In 1628, he finally settled in a hermitage near Monte Cassano, close to Recanate. There, too, he soon became known as a 'very experienced necromancer'. In that capacity he was approached by the prior of an Augustinian convent in the region, one Domenico Zancone, a believer in witchcraft as well.

Zancone, then probably 32 years old, asked his help because he wanted to seduce a woman who was unwilling to give in to him. According to Zancone's testimony before the Inquisition's judges, Bernardo suggested he make a wax statuette of the woman and hang it by a thread in his window. As the wind moved the statuette, the woman would be aroused. Another witness, however, told that the statuette had hung above a fire, the idea being that the heat would influence the woman. In any case, the statuette fell and disappeared, and the plan misfired.

Enters a young nobleman, by name of Giacinto Centini, some 27 years of age, living in his villa of Spinetoli, near Ascoli.³⁶ He knows the monk Domenico, and approaches him. As to his motives, some additional sources give interesting evidence. Since the Centini-case attracted huge public attention, the chroniclers of the day were not the only ones to comment upon it. Obviously, the Pope's biographer could not avoid mentioning it, either. According to Nicoletti,³⁷ Giacinto Centini had been a young farmer when his uncle Felice, a Franciscan monk, was raised to the cardinalate because of his exemplary ways. Incidentally, Felice got his red hat in 1611, at the same time Maffeo Barberini did.³⁸

Felice's cardinalate had immediately conferred noble status on his nephews. Hence, Giacinto became a count and was married off to a daughter of the wealthy Malaspina family, while his brother Maurizio entered the priesthood and soon was known as a competent philosopher and theologian; eventually, he was made bishop of Milete.³⁹

³⁶ *Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emmanuele, Fondo Sessoriano, Codex 270/1483.*

³⁷ *BAV, BL, Vols. 4730–4739: A. Nicoletti, Della Vita di Papa Urbano Ottavo e Istoria del Suo Pontificato.*

³⁸ Cardinal Centini's correspondence with Maffeo Barberini both before and after the latter's accession to the pontificate is in: *BAV, BL, Vols. 8704, 8782.*

³⁹ The documents from which his career can be reconstructed are in: *BAV, BL, Vols. 224, 247, 343, 944, 1115, 1128, 1129, 4483, 4527, 4600.*

The combination of Giacinto's vanity and the public recognition of his cardinal-uncle's merits soon led the young man to believe that even the papacy might be in the family's reach. When Felice would be elected pope, assuming, of course, that Urban conveniently died, he himself might become the all-powerful cardinal-*padrone*. Up to this moment, there is nothing in contemporary Roman society that does not make this an altogether plausible story, fitting most of the known facts. Indeed, one wonders in how many a cardinal's nephew's heart such hopes were not secretly cherished.

As his uncle grew older, Centini, becoming impatient, started brooding. Sometime in 1629, he asked Domenico for a manuscript on necromancy and was given the *Clavicula di Salomone*, provided by another friend of Domenico's, the Augustinian friar Giorgio Vannarelli, who also dabbled in 'black' magic and, not insignificantly in view of the circulation of such texts, later told his judges he had stolen it from one of his ecclesiastical superiors.⁴⁰ What with one thing and another, Domenico introduced Bernardo to Giacinto, and soon the first meeting between the three was arranged.

Giacinto wanted Bernardo to tell him who would be pope if Urban came to die. Obliging, the hermit consulted the book of prognostications of one 'Gioacchino'. This, I think, must have been Joachim of Fiore's 'Prophecies'⁴¹ of which, besides the early printed versions, manuscripts probably circulated as well. Such texts that, after their first appearance in print, were deemed dangerous or subversive, often were put on the Index by the Inquisition. However, precisely because they were forbidden, they continued to enjoy a widespread reading in manuscript form, as apographs; this not only ensured their survival but also, in a way, enhanced their authenticity and, hence, their authority—for a printed text always retains something of the copy.⁴²

And lo, in the magic wheel Bernardo discovered that a Franciscan, obviously Giacinto's uncle, Felice Centini, would succeed the reigning

⁴⁰ This must be the text edited by: S.L.M. Mathers, ed., *The Keys of Salomon the King (Clavicula Salomonis) now first translated and edited from ancient manuscripts in the British Museum* (London 1889). P. Lopez, *Inquisizione, stampa e censura nel regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600* (Naples 1974), 178–197, gives a synthesis of magic rituals and cites from the *Clavicula*.

⁴¹ M. Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the prophetic future* (London 1967). Versions of the medieval manuscript texts had been published since the early years of the 16th century.

⁴² A. Petrucci, 'Per una nuova storia del libro'. [introduction to:] L. Febvre, H.I. Martin, *La Nascità del Libro* (Bari 1977), XXXVI–XXXIX. Cfr. L. De Boni, G. Marini, 'Fra libro a stampa e manoscritto: "l'epitoma chyromantica"', in: Troncarelli, *o.c.*, 239–260.

pope. However, there was one devastating detail: before that would happen, Urban would continue upon the throne for a discouragingly long period.

Then either Centini or, as Centini himself testified, Domenico suggested this situation could be remedied, hinting that Bernardo knew how. Whether the hermit took fright at the idea of conspiring to murder the Pope is not clear, but he refused to cooperate. Yet, after some months, wherein Centini bombarded him with beseeching letters and, finally, threatened to kill him, he agreed, telling the young count there were seven secret ways of getting rid of someone. The method of the wax statuette was the most efficacious. And as he was Master of Hell, knowing how to call all devils to his aid, there would be no problem in fulfilling Centini's dearest wish.

In 1630, therefore, another meeting was called. Bernardo would be the chief magus with Domenico acting as his oracle, while Centini would assist them. Bernardo now used the *Clavicola* as well as a manuscript on necromancy by one Abbano, which he had procured from yet another friar, the Franciscan Ambrogio Vartasconi; this must have been one of the astrological-magical texts written by the medical doctor and philosopher Pietro d'Abano (1250–1315), famous for his commentaries on Aristotle and Dioskurides, as well as for his translations, from the Arabic, of Galen's medical work.⁴³ Thus prepared, Bernardo set the scene.

First, fresh ashes of cypress wood were spread on the floor of a room in Centini's villa. Then, three circles were laid, with a thread spun by a virgin. The first one was dedicated to Jupiter, the second and third ones to two spirits. Apertures had been left in the circles, above which arches had been raised with the names of angels and devils scripted on them, to allow the demons to enter. This, as we know, was the sacred space⁴⁴ leading up to the triangle that had been drawn within the inner circle. There, a Mass to the Holy Spirit was celebrated. Sheets of paper with pens made of the feathers taken from

⁴³ The *Problemata Aristotelis* were published from 1501 onwards; Abano's translation of an astrological text by Abraham ben Ezra came in 1507; the text on Dioskurides appeared in print in 1512; the *Liber Conciliator* was published several times from 1521 onwards. In 1559, the treatise on magic appeared in: H.C. Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Liber quartus de occulta philosophia seu de ceremoniis magicis cui accesserunt Elementa magica Petri de Abano*. Cfr. on Abano: L. Thorndyke, *A history of magic and experimental science*, II (New York 1929), 874–947.

⁴⁴ Cfr. M. Eliade, *Il Sacro e il Profano* (Turin 1976), 19–46.

live geese lay at hand alongside the altar. However, when Bernardo started calling the lower spirits who had to write down the names of the higher, none appeared. After several hours, he gave up, telling Centini that a new appointment would have to be made, in another place, as this location was evidently unsuitable—perhaps a murder had been committed, there.

By now, Domenico took fright, wanting to back out. Bernardo, taking Centini aside, told him that for the next meeting to be more profitable other priests had to be brought in as well; moreover, one of them would have to be sacrificed. Domenico, catching some of their conversation, rightly concluded they meant him to be the victim.

Though Centini tried to ply them with a grand meal, and even with the promise of a cardinal's hat, he evidently felt he could not trust his fellow conspirators. Domenico he followed to Fermo, intercepting him along the road and saying he would kill him if he gave the plot away—even if Domenico invoked the sanctuary of the tabernacle. He threatened Bernardo as well.

Still, in the same year 1630, a new meeting was indeed arranged, with a new installation made of new, unused materials. Moreover, three other priests had joined the group, all three, as came out during the process, practised necromancers who were experts in helping people retrieve lost treasures, et cetera.

For this occasion, a statuette of the pope had been made, fully clad in his pontifical robes and wearing the tiara. Bernardo baptised it with Holy Oil and said a Mass of the Holy Cross. One Fra Cherubino Serafini, some 36 years old and reputedly 'a devil from Hell itself', entered the circles as well, to say a Mass of the Holy Spirit, consecrating a newly-made knife covered with secret signs according to the prescription of the *Clavicula*. A third one, Fra Pietro Zancone, Domenico's brother, and a Franciscan, too, stepped in to hold Urban's likeness above the fire that had been lit in a brand-new brazier. After a few minutes, however, the knife on which the statuette had been fixed became too hot, and the wax figure fell into the fire. Nevertheless, Bernardino continued to imprecate the spirits to appear, and tell him if the Pope was dying as his image was, too. Many hours went by, with no result. At last, Bernardo proclaimed this, too, to be an unfit location.

In the subsequent weeks, Centini and his accomplices scoured the region to find a suitable spot, travelling far into the dark Abbruzzi mountains. According to the summary read to Centini in one of the

manuscript records of the case, they did find one, and practised the ceremony on the statue of an innocent woman; a spirit did appear, and proclaimed the woman's death.⁴⁵

For the next, decisive meeting, Bernardo demanded the attendance of no less than seven priests.⁴⁶ But by then, it was 1631. By then, also, Domenico, still afraid that when a new meeting would be convened, he would be the first victim, had fled to Rome. So had Cherubino Serafini, apparently wary of Centini's constant presence in his home region. However, Centini did not give up easily. Staying well out of the capital, he confided in his uncle's Roman agent, Flaminio Conforti, and asked him to shadow his accomplices. An exchange of some 150 letters resulted—needless to say they have not been preserved. Soon, Conforti could tell Giacinto that Domenico frequented the whores; he succeeded in catching him “in flagrante”, and blackmailed him with his knowledge. This stratagem, however, backfired. Probably both afraid and angry, Zancone now went to the judges of the Inquisition in Rome, to confess of his own will in return for a reduced punishment. By then, it must have been 1632 or, perhaps, 1633.⁴⁷

During these months, the other conspirators were caught and imprisoned as well. In May, 1634, Cherubino succeeded in escaping from the Inquisition's prison: after having made a hole in the wall of his cell, he hid under the laundry to get outside the gates. Immediately, safety procedures were revised and the guardian responsible for giving the laundryman his exit permit was given a heavy fine. However, as the public knew this was a prison destined for necromancers, and as in this period it had started to heavily rain each day exactly at six p.m., supernatural forces were believed to have been at work.

Cherubino, having left town after a few days in hiding, travelled all the way to Rieti, rather foolishly proclaiming his escape to whomever would listen. In the end, he decided to take refuge in a nunnery at Foligno, where he had used to preach, asking the nuns to take care of him. They, of course, were highly intrigued by his story, but, more surprisingly, did not give him away. Meanwhile, however, the sheriff of Foligno had been given notice of Cherubino's escape and, rumour having reached him of the friar's return to the monastery, he went to visit the nuns. He told them that not even the monastery's confessor

⁴⁵ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 8891, f. 107sqq.

⁴⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 5319, f. 148^r.

⁴⁷ According to an indication in: *BAV, Ottob. Lat.*, 2441.

could absolve Cherubino and that they had better deliver him to the authorities. Thus, the Franciscan was brought back to Rome, to the Inquisition's prison where, one must assume, the other suspects had been jailed as well.⁴⁸

Crime and punishment: the trial of Giacinto Centini

The papal Inquisition, from the late 1580's onwards, had become quite used to dealing with cases of magic and witchcraft. Indeed, while during the greater part of the 16th century the Inquisitors had spent most of their energy combating the monster of heresy, especially in its Protestant, or 'Lutheran' form, till the end of the 17th century they would concentrate on this far more surreptitious enemy from within.⁴⁹

It is not easy to reconstruct what may have happened to Centini and his accomplices once interrogations began. The papal Inquisition, as an instrument of power, not only operated between leniency and rigour, it also was extremely prudent in its dealings, especially in cases of witchcraft. Yet, details about its procedure were not printed, if only for fear of revealing to the public the kind of practices it wanted to eradicate. Still, for the early 17th century two manuscript instructions survive, one of them dedicated to Francesco Barberini as Cardinal-president of the Congregation of the Inquisition;⁵⁰ they were written by two episcopal members of the Scaglia-family, one of whom sat on the Inquisition's bench for many years.

It is important to know that a simple confession by itself was not deemed enough evidence to warrant conviction. Yet, a confession there had to be. If necessary, torture was used to obtain it, though it was known that suspects of necromancy and witchcraft often were able to withstand even the severest forms of torture precisely through the use of black magic, applying all kind of ointments and hiding spells in the

⁴⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 250–251.

⁴⁹ E. Monter, J. Tedeschi, 'Towards a statistical Profile of the Italian Inquisition (16th–18th centuries)', in: G. Henningsen, J. Tedeschi, eds., *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe. Studies on Sources and Methods* (De Kalb 1985). F. Bethencourt, *L'Inquisition l'époque moderne. Espagne, Portugal, Italie, XV–XIX siècle* (Paris 1995) offers a useful survey. The magisterial study of A. Prosperi, *Tribunali della Coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, e missionari* (Turin 1996), mainly deals with the sixteenth century.

⁵⁰ It is *BAV, BL*, 4615; J. Tedeschi, 'La questione dei "sortileghi" in due "pratiche" inquisitoriali del '600', in: Troncarelli, *o.c.*, 78–95.

secret places of their body.⁵¹ Whether through these means or from rather more psychologically explainable reasons, many people were indeed able to stand the pain. Recent research in the criminal records of Paris has shown that only in one per cent of its application torture was able to effectuate a confession.⁵²

However, the papal Inquisition insisted upon additional evidence. Nor was it sloppy in obtaining it. Thus, people named by the suspects as their accomplices were not acceptable as witnesses, which, effectively, precluded the occurrence of the epidemical witch-hunts that characterised Northern Europe till well in the 17th century. Therefore, the Inquisition's officers first of all searched for material proof; this might consist of papers with magical signs or incantations or the more popular treatises on magic, such as the *Clavicola* and the texts of D'Abano.⁵³ Also, witnesses were called, who might testify to knowledge of or even participation in rituals of magic. If these included the sacrilegious use of the sacraments, such as Mass, or the invocation of the Devil the suspect would be in grave danger indeed, for these acts were considered heretical and, hence, punishable by death.

The interrogation of the suspects themselves always included questions about their state of mind. Did they feel they had been duped by the Devil, or had they asked for his help of their own, free will? If the latter were the case, and the suspect were an educated person, matters looked bad for him, or her, too, for punishment then would be rather more severe than for some uneducated clot who had succumbed to the temptation of posing as a magical healer—there were many of them, operating openly alongside the trained physicians—or as a helpmate in the discovery of hidden or lost treasure.

The Inquisition's circumspection certainly showed in its dealings with Centini. According to Nicoletti, he was brought before his judges no less than 56 times. First, he maintained he had only asked the hermit for help because he wanted to discover some hidden antiquities in his villa's garden. Then he revoked his testimony, and said the friars had come of their own account, yet to search for hidden treasure. Apparently, in the end Centini was allowed to confess not under torture

⁵¹ J. Tedeschi, 'Inquisitorial law and the Witch', in: B.B. Ankarloo, G. Henningsen, eds., *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford 1990).

⁵² A. Soman, 'Deviance and Criminal Justice in Western Europe, 1300–1800. An Essay in Structure', in: *Criminal Justice History*, 1 (1980), 1–28.

⁵³ Cfr. Thorndyke, *o.c.*, Vol. IV, 632–633.

but by “giuramento”, on oath. The others probably were beaten, with only Conforti refusing to confess despite being given the whip for an hour. Most stories emphatically state that Bernardo was not beaten but convicted on the overwhelming force of the witnesses’ evidence.⁵⁴

Though Giacinto threw himself at the Pope’s mercy, yet, when Urban’s verdict came, it was harsh indeed. Found guilty of “lesa maestà divina e humana”, he was to be burnt alive. All his possessions were confiscated by the Holy Office.

Bernardo would be hung. So would be Cherubino. Bernardo had ranted all through his hearing. He screamed when the verdict was pronounced and was given an iron lockjaw. Perhaps the Inquisitors were unpleasantly reminded of the even in its pictorial form rather fearful image of the open mouth, of the screaming face that in contemporary iconography always denoted devils, gorgons, evil spirits.

Domenico Zancone narrowly escaped death, in view of his voluntary confession. Still, because he was guilty of the death of the woman he wanted to possess, he was sent to the galleys for life. Conforti was given a mere ten years. However, as he had not denounced Centini and, even more, had advised him to flee to Germany, he was found guilty of heresy, but was given the chance to publicly renounce this crime, and the obligation to say an Our Father, a Hail Mary and the Credo each day of his life.

The three friars, accomplices in various degrees, were punished accordingly. Vannarelli, as having known the purpose of the conspiracy, was condemned to seven years in the galleys; Pietro Zancone and Ambrogio Vartasconi got off with five.

When all this had been proclaimed in a tumultuous St. Peter’s—one of the eye witnesses reports how the public screamed, and another tells that one of the policemen was killed by the mob, which necessitated the re-consecration of the basilica⁵⁵—the prisoners were led away.

Meanwhile, the two priests had been defrocked, first, and then returned to prison, as was, in the end, Centini himself, who was put in a blinded carriage and driven to the Corte Savella, there to await his last day. During the night, he wrote, or finished his two last letters, the one to his wife, the other to his uncle.⁵⁶ In the latter he expressed his guilt,

⁵⁴ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 5319, f. 151^v: the cardinals decided not to torture “per non avventurarsi in esso che havesso sostenuto su la corda quello che era chiarissimo”.

⁵⁵ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 266.

⁵⁶ *BAV, Ottoboniani Latini*, Vol. 2441, f. 212^r–213^r.

admitting his crime deserved to be punished by death and thanking God for being allowed to die as a “cavaliere”. He hoped his uncle would pray for his soul’s salvation, ending the letter once more asking the forgiveness, both of his uncle and of his wife and children. It is a significant sequence, showing the hierarchical importance of parentage and relatives even over one’s nearest family. Another source maintains Centini wrote yet a third letter, viz. to his episcopal brother, which, however, has not been preserved.

Monday morning, Campo de’ Fiori soon filled with spectators, thousands of them—the roofs threatened to collapse under their weight.⁵⁷ Despite the use of their sticks, the police had great problems in keeping the public away from touching and, one might conclude from the wording of some texts, even kissing the gallows and the executioner’s axe.⁵⁸ Apparently, people wanted to participate in the sacred, healing power of these instruments of death and, eventually, redemption.

The presence of the axe showed that, somehow, sometime, the original verdict had been changed. Instead of being burned alive, Centini would be beheaded—the privilege of a nobleman. According to the Pope’s biographer, Urban had wanted to show clemency because he wished to express his esteem for the criminal’s uncle. Other sources maintain Centini could not be burned because of his noble status. Anyhow, he would have the rank of his uncle to thank for this privilege, which, within the value system of Rome, meant the Centini-family would not be as disgraced as otherwise would have been the case. Still, the indefatigable diarist Giacinto Gigli reports that a few days after young Centini’s execution, his brother, Bishop Maurizio, was called to Rome and put in the Inquisition’s prison.⁵⁹

At six p.m., the procession arrived. Almost all tales concur in telling how admirably Centini behaved during his last moments: another paper fabrication for propagandistic purposes? Well, perhaps, but the variety of the texts does not really bear this out. However, all texts do tell he refused to let the executioner touch him to remove his cloak and shirt, to lay bare his neck, doing it himself, with great “leggiadria”—

⁵⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 5319, f. 154^v.

⁵⁸ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 5319, f. 154^v.

⁵⁹ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 268.

refined elegance.⁶⁰ Once more expressing his guilt, and his remorse, he died with “grandissima rassegnazione”.⁶¹ His head was shown to the public—another instance of actions in real life mirroring the message proposed by, especially, religious art. Did not the paintings adorning the walls of chapels and churches all over Rome depict biblical heroes like David and Judith holding up the head of enemies rightly slain, of criminals justly punished, in sign of the power God had given them?

For the next days, Centini’s corpse was exposed to the public outside the church of St. John Beheaded, between two burning torches.

During their last moment, the other two main culprits showed remorse as well. They were first hung till their neck broke. Then, their bodies were thrown in the fire. Their ashes were spread on the waters of the Tiber.

All this had left the Romans aghast. For days, the talk in the shops and in the streets returned to this terrible moment, but the general feeling was that justice had been done. People did commiserate with Centini’s lot, asking why he had not been satisfied while Fortune laughed on him, a simple farmer turned nobleman, the sole heir of a cardinal who, himself of poor parents, yet had amassed a fortune; it is a remark which shows that even a Franciscan friar, despite his vows of poverty, did not try to withstand temptations, or, more likely, was not allowed to do so, because society with its stress on the virtue of piety demanded he let his family share in his new situation.

Surely, people concluded, Centini had been possessed by the Devil. Moreover, had he been patient, who knew if he would not have reached his desired goal, after all?⁶²

We do not know whether Centini was widely mourned. The chronicler Teodoro Ameyden suggested Cardinal Centini was enraged at the Pope’s harshness.⁶³ According to Nicoletti, however, Felice Centini, after having ascertained he was in no way implicated or held accountable for in his nephew’s crimes, showed no sadness whatsoever about Giacinto’s fate.

⁶⁰ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 5319, f. 154^v.

⁶¹ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 8891.

⁶² Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, 268.

⁶³ See the manuscript of Th. Ameyden’s “Elogia Summorum Pontificum”, in the Roman Biblioteca Casanatense: *Casanatense, Cod. L III 2*, nrs. 150, 164.

Urban and Campanella

Whereas most people involved in the three cases of 1628–1630 that somehow threatened to affect Urban's life died a horrible death, Campanella was spared. Indeed, but for his many enemies—who deplored his hold over the Pope, that, also, came with his work on the papal poems⁶⁴—his session with Urban probably would not have become public knowledge at all and the situation would not have been perceived by the Pope himself as being harmful to his own position. To succeed in arranging his fall from papal grace, Campanella's detractors cleverly used that instrument of power *par excellence*, the printing press.

From 1629 onwards, the publishing house of Prost-frères, at Lyons, was engaged in printing Campanella's *Astrologia*. After the publication of the first six volumes, in 1629, they received an addition to the text, titled *De fato siderali vitando*, with the request to attach it to the book as its seventh volume; it was duly published—whether in Lyons or, as has been suggested, surreptitiously in Rome itself and, moreover, by the Vatican Press.⁶⁵

Soon, Campanella realised he had been framed: the text contained, if not a *verbatim*, yet an all too literal account of his secret sessions with Urban, which openly showed the Pope's astrological inclinations, and his participation in ritual that according to the Inquisition's standards could easily be termed black magic. This sealed the friar's fate.

He was not nominated adviser to the Holy Office, the Inquisition, as had been envisaged both by him and, perhaps, by the Pope. On the contrary, he was imprisoned again, though then liberated anew. For though Urban was greatly displeased with the publication of the *De fato*, he did allow Campanella to submit it to the Inquisition. Remarkably, they did not consider it heretical, which effectively exonerated Campanella.⁶⁶ This, it seems, was the effect of a tract in which Campanella tried to extricate himself from this predicament. In the *Apologeticus ad libellum "De siderali fato vitando"*, he argued that everything that had happened between him and the Pope could and should be innocently explained.

⁶⁴ See Chapter II of this book.

⁶⁵ F. Grillo, *Questioni campanelliane. La stampa fraudolenta e clandestina degli Astrologicorum Libri* (Cosenza 1961).

⁶⁶ Amabile (1887), *o.c.*, I, 360–361.

The white robes were to protect them against the influence of eclipses; the seven torches represented the seven planets; the perfumes had been used to clear the air of evil smells. Moreover, there was no superstition, no black magic, no pact with the Devil. Although Campanella does not explicitly say so, one might even assume that the sealed room represented an undisturbed, as it were normal celestial world, wherein the candles and the torches acted as the lights of a substitute firmament, ordered as it should be, to counteract the unfavourable dislocated conjunction of the actual planets in Heaven outside; indeed, the entire ritual was intended as a prophylactic against the disastrous effects of eclipses and bad planetary influences.

In arguing like this, Campanella not only tried to make clear these lights did not symbolise the planets, which, as he knew, would have reeked too much of demoniac magic; he also hoped to demonstrate the essentially physical nature of his kind of magic.⁶⁷ For his power, according to him, was the power of science.

Indeed, he went on to explain he advocated a form of astrological physics, a science that did not contravene the Church's teachings. Either by demonstration from empirical data or by probability, inferred, also, from empirical data, the course of the stars could be known. It did not influence Man's free will, as the Arabs argued. It did, however, influence both Man's physical body and his animal passions; these, in their turn, influenced Man's God-given, immaterial spirit that had to decide whether or not to give in to these passions. Obviously, Campanella was trying to enlist the support of the great Saint Thomas. In a way, his reliance on the authority of Aquinas was not a simple expedient, only. For admittedly, the great saint had been rather contradictory in his statements about astrology, and some texts, probably not of his hand, but favouring certain types of astrology, had been uncritically included in the official, 1570-edition of his works, published in Rome. Hence, Campanella freely used him to substantiate and authorize his own idea that, *per accidens*, the stars, steered by God's servants, the angels, influenced both the body, its animal spirit and, consequently, its immortal soul. In the long-winded title of his *Astrologia*, he therefore claimed that his physical-physiological astrology was in complete accord with God's creation and the Church's interpretation of it.

⁶⁷ Walker, *Magic, o.c.*, 220–222.

Obviously, all these ingenious, indeed sophistic arguments cannot have satisfied the more orthodox theologians, but they did procure him his freedom.

Moreover, it seems Urban still was fascinated by the ideas of the Calabrian monk. After Campanella had been set free, the Pope allowed him to try and realize his great project of a *Collegio Barberiniano*; there, missionaries would be trained who, eventually, were to spread the new, reformed Catholicism all over the world—a Catholicism, however, very much in Campanella's emphatically unorthodox vein. No wonder nothing came of it. Indeed, Campanella's position became increasingly untenable. Finally, in October 1634, Urban allowed or even urged him to leave Italy for France, so as to escape the risks of further prosecution. One must assume he wanted to prevent Campanella from becoming a continuous embarrassment. Also, the French ambassador in Rome, knowing Campanella's anti-Spanish feelings, was quite willing to help him get to Paris. Probably while there, in view of a new edition of his work, Campanella removed from the proofs the allusions to his conferences with the Pope.⁶⁸ Yet, he continued to dabble in astrology, in 1635 casting the horoscope of the newly-born Dauphin: the young Louis who later became the Sun King, the embodiment of the image so dear to Campanella's astrological and prophetic visions,⁶⁹ the man who not only symbolically positioned himself in Urban's footsteps but very much wanted to be the successor of papal and indeed Roman supremacy in matters cultural.

The one remaining question is who had been the men who had duped Campanella in such a clever way? They were his fellow Dominicans Niccolò Ridolfi and Niccolò Riccardi—the same prelates who belonged to the Morandi-circle that, precisely in this period, was being investigated by the Inquisition. Apart from preventing their co-religionist to rise to a position of power, for fear of being implicated in this scandal they may well have tried to cover their own tracks while at the same time putting Urban in a position wherein he could not very well act against them.

⁶⁸ O. Lucchesi, 'Il "De fato siderali vitando": varianti d'autore campanelliane in un codice della Casanatense', in: Troncarelli, *o.c.*, 127–135.

⁶⁹ G. Ernst, 'Vocazione Profetica e Astrologica in Tommaso Campanella', in: Troncarelli, *o.c.*, 136–155.

Astrology: a priestly power, a divine science?

Obviously, the origins of astrology coincide with the origins of religion. The power to read the stars, and use the knowledge thus acquired to steer one's life seems to reflect an almost universal hope to evade the disasters, minor and major, that threaten Man's existence. With the advent of a mechanical vision of the universe, which was part of the advent of science, astrology could not but retain or even increase its power. Might not a cosmos understood as a machine perhaps be even easier influenced by a science that used its very laws, analysed its very rationality?

Always, there had been books, books written by clerics, priests, mostly. And now there came more, still mostly written by priests but increasingly also by non-ecclesiastical scientists. For centuries, libraries had collected such books, as had, inevitably, the *Vaticana*. Princes had collected them, and cardinals, too: Cardinal Granvelle, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Elector of Bavaria all hoped that the astral chains which worked through plants and stones would serve them, or that the alchemy of a man like Paracelsus would help them; indeed, a cardinal-archbishop of Augsburg financed the Italian translation of Paracelsus's text.⁷⁰

Many comparable texts were printed in papal Rome, during the 16th century. The learned academicians of the Lincei who formed the milieu into which, from its start in the first years of the 17th century, the rising young prelate Maffeo Barberini had been introduced, while advocating a new view of science as an experimental activity, collected them as well. Men like Federico Cesi and Francesco Stelluti all had their horoscopes cast and they themselves wrote scientific treatises on the wisdom imparted by the stars.⁷¹ Often, they used both the arguments of the most hallowed tradition, the Ancient one, by attributing their theories to Aristotle, to Hermes Trismegistos or to Plato, while at the same time referring to the findings of 'modern' science, which quickly were acquiring an authority of their own.

In this vein, Tommaso Campanella wrote to his friend Galileo Galilei, in 1614, arguing that he was adding to as well as drawing upon a

⁷⁰ R. Halleux, 'Il ruolo delle fonti antiche nell'ermetismo romano del XVI secolo: alchimia e "libri naturali"', in: Troncarelli, *o.c.*, 159–174.

⁷¹ In evidence in: R. Pirota, ed., *F. Cesi, Phylosophicarum tabularum ex frontispiciis naturalis theatri* (Rome 1904).

venerably antique body of empirical data.⁷² In 1623, Campanella had published *La Città del Sole*; it was the year of Maffeo's election to the papacy. It is not at all unlikely that the cardinal-soon-to-be-pope had read this text, and that it had been one of the reasons why Campanella, after his release from the Neapolitan prison, was whisked off to Rome.

For in Campanella's hierocratic utopia, the astrologer, the priest-king is the man who commands all the sciences: he is the 'meta-fisico' and, consequently, the ideal ruler, the law-giver. Using the entire body of his knowledge, including his insight in the movement of the stars which rule the physical world, he succeeds in properly guiding his state, both in its temporal and in its spiritual dimension. Indeed, Campanella had introduced a vision of a "Papa-Sole" and, elsewhere, had argued that "le monarchie delle nazioni [would] finirsi nella Romana",⁷³ suggesting that, in the end, universal power would return to Rome, whence, according to tradition and ideology, it had originated. This, of course, while undoubtedly coinciding with Urban's own private hopes and aspirations, cleverly played upon most popes' secret dreams of a 'universal monarchy'.⁷⁴ Nor, it should be added, was Campanella the only one to liken the reigning pope to the Sun. Such a tract as Tomaso Tomasi's *Gl'immortali splendori di Urbano* is one extended eulogy of the Pope who, as the Sun, the centre of the universe, rules the world.⁷⁵

Pope Urban read the stars. Francesco Barberini read the stars. Indeed, all members of the Barberini-family read the stars. Manuscripts in their possession would laud the various members of the tribe as stars in a constellation with the Pope as its sunny center. That, of course, was the allegory of power. But other texts show a belief in 'what is quite clear and does not need proof, viz. that a certain force emanates from heaven, and, descending from those eternal bodies to earth, constantly changes it.'⁷⁶ In view of the prevailing suspicion of black magic and related practices, the Barberini did try to distinguish between true and false astrology, perhaps especially after Urban's 1631-astrology bull—of which anon—had been promulgated. True astrology was the study

⁷² Campanella to Galilei, March 8, 1614, in: V. Spampanato, ed., *Tommaso Campanella, Lettere* (Bari 1927), 177.

⁷³ Amabile (1887), *o.c.*, II, doc. 346.

⁷⁴ R. de Mattei, *Il Pensiero politico italiano nell'Età della Controriforma*, II (Milan 1984), 211–247; F. Bosbach, "Monarchia Universalis". *Eine politische Leitbegriff der frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen 1988).

⁷⁵ The tract is in: *BAV, BL*, 4913, fols. 1^r–1^v.

⁷⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4258, f. 3.

of the heavens' motions, better called the science of astronomy; false astrology was the effort to use the stars to come to a judgement about one's life and actions.⁷⁷ The victory of rationality, or the victory of power?

On another plane, it is remarkable that, at least in the various cases I have studied, the priests involved mostly belonged to the Augustinian or Franciscan Orders, that is, to the oldest Orders of the Church. It is not simple to reason why this should have been so. Of course, these communities, traditionally associated with a mendicant, indeed even vagrant way of life, easily attracted the lower elements of society. Often under false pretences, such men, using the status conferred by the monk's hood, tried to carve out a living of some comfort, playing on the beliefs and superstitions of the masses. But by the 16th century, these Orders had to share their power with a number of new ones, such as the Jesuits and the Oratorians, to name but a few, who, however, stressed quite a different set of values. While they, too, continued to indulge in various forms of speculation, including astrological/astronomical divination, they couched it in the new language of power, the language of the printed book, the language of science; this definitely helped them establishing themselves in the religious and political forefront of society. Consequently, many who belonged to the old clerical-monastic establishment, and who did not have a background of solid and even scholarly education, must have reacted by turning to such means of power as black magic through astrology and witchcraft in order to retain their position, their power.

Between two worldviews

Reconsidering the three interconnected cases that form the basis for this chapter, it is tempting to conjecture about their general implications.

Obviously, in Roman society, as well as in the Papal States at large, the power of priesthood, vested in the clergy, was extensive. The Council of Trent had done everything to reinforce it, both by strictly supervising the formation of morally secure priests, after so many centuries of discrediting negligence especially in the field of clerical education, and

⁷⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3261, f. 22.

by reasserting the sanctity of the sacerdotal function. Yet, despite far tighter control, especially through the periodical diocesan visitations, one has to admit that by the first decades of the 17th century this policy had been only partially successful.

Meanwhile, the lower clergy especially may have felt its power was diminishing. Indeed, I think the process of bureaucratic centralization of the pope's *temporale* in the 16th and early 17th century while aiming to provide it with new, but now centrally controlled weapons, precisely may have undermined some of the clergy's erstwhile authority. Also, the increasing stress on the importance of education, of learning, as well as the increasing authority of the written word with its unequivocal, universal, controllable applicability may have disconcerted priests who used to rely on ritual and symbolic actions for the exercise of their power in mostly closed rural communities. This may explain why so many clergymen still clung to, or perhaps even returned to practices that might cement their standing in these communities, among believers who were overwhelmingly illiterate. The seven priests involved in the Centini-case and the unnamed number cooperating with the parson of San Carlo obviously were but a small percentage of an urban and even more of a rural clergy who engaged in the arts of black magic.

On the level of the educated clergy, amongst whom, obviously, one must include the early modern popes themselves, there may have been another element introducing emotions of doubt into an erstwhile stable world view. To many, the new sciences, offering explanations that seemed to undermine acknowledged truths and beliefs while simultaneously using the old language of an astrology that for centuries balanced between white and black magic, must have been disconcerting indeed. On the one hand, traditional values were being discredited by some, on the other, new forms of power seemed available to others. Consequently, people may well have felt that an eclectic use of the various instruments of power at hand would help them keep that power in the face of a situation experienced as increasingly unstable and therefore threatening. Hence, one might try to understand Urban's own vacillations. Unlike his 14th-century predecessor Boniface VIII (1235–1303) who, in a less 'rational' age had had no doubts relying on the promises contained in the scientific-magical treatises of his court doctor, Arnaldo da Villanova,⁷⁸ he was torn between two worldviews. This seems, obvi-

⁷⁸ On him: A. Paravicini Bagliani, *Medicine e scienze della natura alla corte dei papi del Duecento* (Spoleto 1991).

ously unintentionally but revealingly, corroborated by the comment on the Centini-case of Theodoro Ameyden, in his rather hostile sketch of the Barberini pontificate. He implies that the Pope had pressed for a harsh verdict precisely because he believed in the consequences of such magical acts as Centini had practised.⁷⁹

In his weaker moments, Urban may have forgotten the ineluctable theological tenet that it was an act of heresy to try and alter God's will by influencing the stars. Yet, after the discomfiture of his sessions with Campanella, and probably under pressure of the more rigorist elements among his entourage, he must have decided to, at least publicly, abandon astrology and its concomittant practices.

On April, 1, 1631, the bull *Inscrutabilis iudiciorum Dei* was published, mostly rephrasing Sixtus's text of January, 5, 1586, *Coeli et Terrae Creator*.⁸⁰ It specifically forbade the use of astrological science—as it still was called—to support any pretence to knowledge of the future, and the use of arcane means to either positively or negatively influence the fate of the living.

Now, Sixtus had written that such forms of knowledge could not be considered “veraces artes aut disciplinae” but were to be condemned as “fallaces et vanae improborum hominum astutiae et daemonium fraudibus introductae.” His bull enumerated the practices people had to be aware of, and ended with a list of the quite severe punishments awaiting those who did not heed his orders.

All this now was repeated by Urban. He, however, stressed the inscrutability of God's will, thus entering the debate about the status of astrology as magic or science. Also, and quite significantly, he emphasised the criminality of those who speculated about the welfare of the ruler, and promised the utmost severity to those who in one way or another used magical practices to influence the lives of a pope and his relatives. If the culprits were priests, they would be handed to the secular arm, notwithstanding their ecclesiastical immunity.

Campanella's political versatility which, in a way, mirrored that of his papal patron, is reflected in the fact that himself he was closely involved in establishing the text for Urban's revised version of Sixtus' bull.⁸¹ Most amazingly, the new text, though in parts even more severe than Sixtus's words had been, in some parts tried to preserve the possibility

⁷⁹ *Casanatense, Codex L III 12*, nrs. 150, 164.

⁸⁰ Both Bulls are to be found in any version of the *Bullarium Romanum*.

⁸¹ This, at least, seems clear from an *avviso* printed in: Amabile (1887), *o.c.*, II, 150.

of the existence of the 'good' or white magic he had developed for Pope Urban. Campanella may well have hoped to thus establish a monopoly of power in this to him all-important field.

In this connection, it is important to return to the problem of dating Centini's conspiracy. Most sources differ considerably on the actual course of events between Centini's first contacts with his two accomplices, sometime in the course of the year 1630 and the moment the monk Domenico gave the conspiracy away. It is not improbable the plot already had been revealed in 1631 or 1632 and not, as some sources seem to imply, only in 1633 or 1634.⁸² Certainly, interrogations started as early as Fall 1633. If this is the case, the Centini-episode may have originated in the same climate that, stemming from the Morandi-revelations, led to the execution of the parish priest of San Carlo. Also, Urban's decision to reissue a revamped version of the Sistine bull condemning the use of black magic may have been the consequence not only of the scandal surrounding the abbot of Santa Prassede and the ensuing case of the Vicar of San Carlo but also of the first intimations of the Centini-plot; if so the text of the bull explains the severity of the judgements meted out to Centini and his accomplices. Moreover, the problems caused by the earlier Campanella-episode of 1628–1630 would be part of the bull's background as well.

To illustrate the complexities involved in the parallel existence of two worldviews in Barberini Rome, it is necessary again to cite the Galilei-case, which became a *cause célèbre* in 1631–1632.

Obviously, Urban did not really want Galilei to be punished as severely as, in the end, he was. Indeed, his own inclinations seem to have been against it, as he seems to have been opposed to the exile he had to impose on Campanella. From his first years in Rome, Maffeo Barberini, moving, as an intellectual, among the Roman intellectuals, had been fascinated by Galilei's research, facilitating and promoting it whenever he could. Galilei, on his part, did not stop lauding Cardinal Barberini and, in various letters, expressed his joy when his protector finally sat on Peter's chair. He had every reason to be enthusiastic, for Urban continued to show him his favour. But Urban had his enemies and even a pope could not always follow his own inclinations. The Spaniards and the Jesuits, for various and partly different reasons of

⁸² This might be concluded from the chronological sequence of events as given in the text edited by Rosi, *o.c.*

their own, decided that Urban should be taught a lesson. The publication of Galilei's *Dialogo dei Due Massimi Sistemi* in 1632 offered them the excuse they needed.

Urban and his nephew, Cardinal Francesco, who had come to admire Galilei as well, could not prevent that the scholar was brought before the Inquisition's judges. Yet they did their best to have him convicted on a minor charge, only, instead of being named and punished as an heretic because his materialistic ideas held the real danger of going against the central dogma of transubstantiation.⁸³ Proceedings against Galilei sent shock waves through the world of learning. Peiresc, in a letter to his Roman friend Holstenius, one of Urban's and Francesco's favourites, wrote that while he believed 'these Fathers are handling in good faith, they [yet] will have quite some trouble in convincing the world.'⁸⁴ Peiresc also, rather daringly, presumed on old friendship and wrote in no unclear terms to Francesco Barberini, warning him of the consequences of Rome's stance for the reputation of the papacy at large. To no avail. Galilei was found guilty, and the well-deserved fame of the Barberini as patrons of the new sciences as well as the cultural standing of the Holy See itself was indeed tarnished for centuries to come. And yet, a few years later, a man who owed the better part of his scholarly existence to the protection of the Barberini family, was allowed to publish works that in many ways exhibited the views they had once held but had then felt forced to condemn. The learned Jesuit polygraph Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) tried to re-create the original unity of the world, openly advocating the use of all sciences to regain the lost language, the lost wisdom.

Now, on the whole, the Jesuits were opposed to the 'old' languages, the allegories and the symbols, the hieroglyphs and the magical signs, which not only were tainted with heresy but, also, referred to a power they definitely did not want to become wide-spread; instead, they preferred and propounded rationality and realism, the language of the written, printed word and of images that did not invite multiple interpretations.

But still, here was Kircher, who had been called to Rome by Pope Urban in 1633, publishing, in 1641, his hugely popular book on magnetism that dealt, amongst other things, with magnetism in connection

⁸³ P. Redondi, *Galileo: Heretic* (Princeton 1987). Also: M. Biagioli, *Galileo Courtier: The Practice of Science and the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago 1993).

⁸⁴ *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 6505, Peiresc to Holste, 2 June 1633, f. 98^v.

to love, and music. In 1650, in his *Musurgia Universalis*, he argued, like Campanella had done, that music was poetry, that tones could affect man's emotions. In subsequent works of vast erudition, combining theology and philosophy, linking Christianity to the equally old or even older religions and traditions of the Near, the Middle and the Far East, Kircher tried to merge them all into one grand concept. He even deciphered, at least to his own and many of his readers' satisfaction, that most ancient and hence powerful of languages, hieroglyphic, which gained him great fame.

In his works, Kircher very much put himself in the tradition of men like Francesco Patrizi (1529–1597), with his 1591-*Nova de universis Philosophia*. This was definitely a neo-Platonist work which, consequently, was condemned by the Inquisition⁸⁵ though it was dedicated to the then pope, while, significantly, I found that Urban held a copy of it in the Barberini Library while Patrizi's apologies against his defamers are among the Barberini manuscripts, too.⁸⁶ Kircher also was influenced by a man like the wide-ranging, speculative metaphysical philosopher Giordano Bruno, burned as a heretic in Rome 1600. Inevitably, he followed in the wake of (near) contemporaries like Campanella and Galilei, always, of course, taking care not to advertise his indebtedness to these censored authors. With all these men, he shared an all-encompassing vision of the world and the cosmos. But while, for example, Campanella maintained—at least at some stage in his career—that the primacy of Christianity and hence of the Church could not be argued against the older claims of such texts as the *Corpus Hermeticum*,⁸⁷ Kircher, though retracing the development of knowledge to pre-Christian cultures, solidly took a position wherein precisely the Church of Rome was the sole heir to and the guardian of all these traditions, thus claiming for it the power that went with them.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ M. Rotondò, 'Cultura umanistica e difficoltà di censori. Censura ecclesiastica e discussioni cinquecentesche sul Platonismo', in: *Le Pouvoir et la Plume. Incitation, contrôle et répression dans l'Italie du XVIe siècle* (Paris 1982), 15–50.

⁸⁶ *BAV, BL.*, Vol. 318.

⁸⁷ C. Vasoli, *Ermetismo e cabala nel tardo Rinascimento e nel primo '600*, in: Troncarelli, *o.c.*, 105–118.

⁸⁸ On Kircher: C.P. Reilly, *Athanasius Kircher, S.J. Master of a Hundred Arts* (Rome-Wiesbaden 1974); D. Pastine, *La nascita dell'idolatria. L'Oriente religioso di Athanasius Kircher* (Firenze 1978); J. Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher. A Renaissance Man and the Quest for Lost Knowledge* (London 1979); V. Rivoecchi, *Esotismo in Roma barocca. Studi sul Padre Kircher* (Rome 1982); M. Casciato, a.o. eds., *Enciclopedismo in Roma barocca: Athanasius Kircher e il museo del Collegio Romano tra Wunderkammer e museo scientifico* (Venice 1986).

Conclusion. The pope's power to punish, or: harmony restored

Admittedly, it seems that papal Rome was not among those states and towns of 17th-century Europe where numerous cases of magic were annually tried. Nor would it be just to credit it with the kind of mentality that produced bloody witch-hunts in Northern and Central Europe.⁸⁹ Yet, the three connected cases presented here, in their obvious relation to the far more famous cases of Campanella and Galilei, allow us to analyse some basic elements of Roman Baroque culture.

The uses to which astrology and magic were put all related to the craving for power of the people concerned. They wanted to have power over their own lives, to evade its misery, to increase its happiness, if possibly by aspiring after the most powerful positions their society could offer. Urban wanted to postpone his inevitable death. Morandi must have enjoyed the power of being credited with so much power. The priest of San Carlo wanted to be a cardinal, as, indeed, Centini and his accomplices wanted to be cardinals—in Rome, this was the epitome of happiness, the penultimate position of power and, to a single lucky man, the road to ultimate power.

Obviously, the festive, even ritual character of the “abiure” in St. Peter’s and the subsequent executions on Campo de’Fiori was meant to impress, to project a message. It was a message that, in combination with Urban’s 1631-bull, demonstrated papal power, the power to restore social and even cosmic harmony—even though the Campanella and Galilei-cases also showed the limits of this Pope’s power.

First, and foremost, the bull *Inscrutabilis iudiciorum Dei* as well as the Galilei-verdict and the Campanella-exile told the public about the power of the Church and its ruler. The French scholar Gabriel Naudé perceptively wrote:

On pardonne à Rome aux Athées, aux Sodomites, aux Libertins et à plusieurs autres fripons, mais on ne pardonne jamais à ceux qui mesdisent du Pape ou de la Cour Romaine, ou qui semblent revoquer en doute cette toute-puissance papale.⁹⁰

Only a few years before the Pope’s death in 1643, Alvise Contarini, Venetian ambassador at the papal court, had reported to his masters that Urban

⁸⁹ Fiorani, *o.c.*, n. 97, gives a convincing interpretation of the available data.

⁹⁰ Naudé as cited by: Lutz, ‘Rom un Europa’, *a.c.*

regola in gran parte le sue attioni con i moti del cielo, dei quali è molto intelligente, ancorché con censure grandissime n'habbi proibito lo studio a tutti—

'he regulates his life largely according to the motions of the stars, of which he is very knowledgeable, even though by heavy punishment he has forbidden their study to everyone else.⁹¹ That power was at stake, also was expressed by Giacinto Gigli. When, after Urban's death, he surveyed the Barberini pontificate in a few lines that show both criticism and compassion, he noted the Pope had courted learned and virtuous men and had been well-versed in poetry and rhetoric himself. He added that Urban: "fu anche molto versato nell'Astrologia, ma la prohibi agli altri": 'also, he was well-versed in astrology but forbade its use to others.⁹² Would he have written this, some sixteen years after the Campanella-episode, if people had not been convinced the Pope had continued to be inclined to use the power of the stars himself, but very much also to prevent others from doing so as well?

In the 1630's, Urban gave in to those who wanted him to act against such forms of power as 'ancient' astrology and the 'new' sciences. These men acted from a variety of reasons; some may have feared these forms of power threatened to move away from papal control, others undoubtedly felt threatened in their deepest-felt beliefs.

Yet, while Urban was well aware he could no longer allow himself publicly to be connected with men like Campanella and Galilei, who had become a liability rather than an asset, instead of imprisoning the former, he permitted his 'escape' to France, and allowed the latter to come out of his predicaments as lightly as possible: with a comfortable house arrest. On the other hand, the Morandi- and Centini-cases show that, definitely, the Pope did not tolerate those who proposed to use these powers to threaten him.

For another ten years, Urban himself continued in his ways. Whether he really identified himself with the all-powerful chief magus who ruled Campanella's 'City of the Sun' cannot be ascertained, but the image of a priest-king who, through the science of the stars, partook of divine knowledge cannot have been far from his mind. Still, though the Pope wanted supreme power through whatever means, if necessary the forbidden language of magic, black or white, in which he continued to

⁹¹ Cited in: Amabile (1887), *o.c.*, I, 281.

⁹² Gigli, *Diario, o.c.*, 436.

believe if we accept Ameyden's and Contarini's estimate, he certainly did not want to share this language and its power with his subjects.

Consequently, the Church used the instrument of the Index firmly to control the reading habits of its flock. An enormous number of books were forbidden food, at least to the common man. However, those who were close to the centre of power were, by degrees, allowed to share in its wider knowledge. The papal relatives, led by Cardinal-*Padrone* Francesco, were given numerous titles of exemption, absolving them from the punishment involved in reading this or that forbidden book. Hence, with the help of such well-informed librarians as Suarez and Holste and their contacts with 'heretic' authors and book-sellers, the libraries of the Barberini were, indeed, well stocked with texts exploring ancient lore and all kinds of magic: the owners could share in whatever esoteric wisdom and power these texts might impart. Not surprisingly, the Barberini owned, besides a number of Kabbala-manuscripts, a voluminous compendium of the same texts of D'Abano that had been used by Centini's accomplices, and of all kind of treatises explaining in great detail the exact procedure one should follow when consulting with the spirits of the nether world.⁹³

The message of Urban's 1631-bull and the related occurrences also told the public about the Church's role in the restoration of harmony between earth and heaven. Even criminals of the basest sort who had conspired against God's vicar on earth, deserved some kind of last rites when beginning their voyage to the other world. The fact that so many manuscript versions survive both of Centini's last moments in this world and of his last letters, documenting his hope of ultimate salvation, indicates what double message the authorities tried to project, to the Pope's subjects and, indeed, to all believers. One may even wonder whether, specifically, Centini's farewell-letters were not partly or wholly fabricated by the Curial authorities to ensure the effectiveness of a message that certainly meant to instil the proper feelings in an audience who had to be convinced of the essential wickedness of the actions perpetrated by this man.

Having confessed his crime, Centini was allowed to expiate his sins through his punishment at the hands of the powers of his world, the Church. His much-applauded courage could be interpreted as proof

⁹³ *BAV, BL*, Vols. 725, 3032, 4275.

positive that he accepted the Church's power in this domain. Having asked Heaven's forgiveness, through the prayers of his relatives and his appeal to the Pope, he also showed his belief in the power of the religion of which the Pope was the supreme representative on earth. But of course, there was one thing even the Pope could not guarantee. Ultimately, only God's mercy would decide whether Centini would be saved.

EPILOGUE

THE RETURN OF THE MUSES: INSTRUMENTS OF CULTURAL POLICY IN BARBERINI ROME, 1623–1644

Introduction. Rome: theatre state and court society

Viewing the various manifestations of papal culture that have been analysed in the previous chapters of this book within the wider context of early modern Italy and Europe, it seems appropriate to end this study by returning to the concept of the theatre referred to in the Introduction. Early modern man saw the world as theatre, and himself as an actor, playing the role prescribed by society and its traditions.¹ When Queen Christina of Sweden wrote to the French ambassador in The Hague announcing her decision to abdicate, she said: ‘if I now retire behind the scenes, I do not ask for a Lament. I very well know that I’ve played my role not according to the rules normally set for the Theatre’.² And indeed, she had given up her power because she did not want to conform to its rules.

Though wielding power was, of course, not the prerogative of states and their rulers, only, they yet claimed it to a large extent. The nature of power in the early modern state and of communications in early modern society required the (re-)presentation, the visualization of that power in a way much resembling the many forms that combine to make the theatre. Hence, power was made manifest in all kinds of state occasions centring around and, indeed, orchestrated by the court that was the fulcrum of this society, its ultimate theatre, whence emanated the norms that, to a greater or lesser degree, influenced everyone’s thoughts and behaviour. Whether we analyse a public banquet, a cere-

¹ See on this *topos*: L.G. Christian, *Theatrum mundi: the history of an idea* (New York 1987).

² “Pour me retirer derrière le Theatre, ie ne m’enqueste point du Plaudite. Je scay que la scène que j’aye représentée n’a pas esté composée selon les soins communs du Theatre...”. A copy of this letter, dated February 1657, is in: *BAV*, Manoscritti Chigiani, Vol.N III 83, ff. 231^r–234^v.

monial entry or a work of art, we always should realize they served to make the State's power present to the Public. That power was represented through images composed of as many dramatic, theatrical elements as possible and necessary to form a *bel composto*, a satisfyingly well-ordered, convincing whole, in order to create, enforce or reinforce the reality of power.

Baroque Rome was, perhaps, the first epitome of a European 'theatre state', of a court society that used all forms of culture, including, inevitably, the rules that governed individual behaviour, as instruments to establish and enhance power.³ Indeed, in Rome, such manifestations as patronage of the arts and sciences and other princely 'sports' directed at image building definitely should not be seen as evasions of monarchy, but as of its very essence: as manifestations of power.

The excessively long pontificate of Pope Urban VIII (1623–1644) and the consequently long 'reign' of the Barberini family during the same period have provided ample evidence of the fact that, as Rome's rulers *pro tempore*, perhaps even more than any of their predecessors they were aware of the need to create a theatre where power could be represented and, thus, retained, enhanced, enlarged, of the need to use whatever forms of public culture they could influence as propaganda.

This epilogue resumes material from the previous chapters while at the same time bringing in new data. In drawing an overall picture of Barberini cultural policy, I hope to provide the first systematic analysis of the means the Barberini used to create power through culture.

Others already have interpreted some of the most visual aspects of Barberini propaganda policy, especially such projects of grandiose architecture and decoration as Bernini's *baldacchino*, erected over St. Peter's tomb, and his *Cathedra Petri*, in the basilica's apse, both willed by Pope Urban, to symbolize papal supremacy by expressing its millennial continuity. They have been exhaustively studied and, indeed, analysed perhaps too often. Much attention also has been given to the Barberini family *palazzo*, culminating in the so-called *Gloria dei Barberini*, an act of image building if ever there was one: the stupendous fresco decorating the vault of the palace's main *salone* depicted Holy Wisdom in the guise of Divine Providence as descending upon Earth through the mediation of a papal family that, in stressing this fact, legitimised its power,

³ Cfr. C. Geertz, *Negara* (Princeton 1980); J. von Krüdener, *Die Rolle des Hofes im Absolutismus* (München 1973); N. Elias, *The Court Society* (Oxford 1993).

its right to rule.⁴ What has been shown by the studies of these and other great works of Barberini art, such as the numerous paintings and pieces of sculpture commissioned for churches and palaces alike,⁵ is the intricate relationship between power, ideology and its imagery. At the same time, the relationship between patrons and painters—or, for that matter, architects, musicians, sculptors—has been illuminated: the fame of the artists enhanced the reputation and, therefore, the power of the sponsors.

Amongst these major artistic manifestations of Barberini cultural policy, one instance has been strangely neglected: the Barberini Chapel in Sant' Andrea della Valle. It is the more important because it marks the beginning of the Barberini's (artistic) presence in Rome. Therefore, I have analysed it in the Prologue to the present study. Outlining the relationship between the Barberini family and the painter Domenico Cresti, also known as *Il Passignano*, and the other artists who were responsible for the execution of Monsignore Maffeo Barberini's ideas about the decoration of the new family chapel, I have tried to show that Maffeo's pretensions and ideas, worked in stone and stucco, in marble and mosaics, made the chapel the first public statement of Barberini family propaganda and of Maffeo's own religious beliefs. This chapel, where the dead Barberini were gathered to look down upon the living as they proclaimed their belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, represented the family's image in Rome. It intended to consolidate the Barberini's social and cultural prestige in the town where they hoped to rise to power, even though, at that time, for Maffeo the papacy was, if anything, still a dream, only.⁶

All the manifestations of culture made durable in marble and stone, bronze and gold, paint and stucco and, indeed, embroidery—for one should not forget the continuing role of pictorial tapestries—, served both as propaganda and as the background for more propaganda, which was none the less effective for being, sometimes, ephemeral indeed. This obviously was the case in the numerous occasions of

⁴ Cfr. for a contemporary description and interpretation: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6529, f. 24, sqq. Also: F. Ubaldini, *Il Pellegrino, ovvero la dichiarazione delle pitture della Sala Barberina*, in *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4335, and another "Dichiarazione": *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4342. The most recent interpretation of the various ceiling cycles in the Palazzo is: J.B. Scott, *Images of Nepotism. The painted ceilings of Palazzo Barberini* (Princeton 1991).

⁵ See: O. Pollak, *Die Kunsttätigkeit unter Urban VIII*, Vols. 1–2 (Vienna 1928, 1931).

⁶ See the first chapter of the present study.

public ceremony, when the Pope and his relatives spent vast sums on such festivities as the Easter Banquet or the Procession of Corpus Christi.⁷

To record just one such occasion that called upon all the arts to set a magnificent scene, create a veritable spectacle within the context of the Roman ‘theatre’, the fourth chapter of this book analysed the 1637-Roman sojourn of the Imperial ambassador Prince Eckembergh. On the basis of a great many descriptions I have recreated the various spectacles and interpreted their significance for the European power game in which the papacy had to join if only to retain its own power.⁸ The documents tell of ceremonial entries, where the Roman nobility vied with the ambassadorial suite for public attention and favour through the sheer magnificence and display of their processions. They tell of the sumptuous decoration of the façades of the protagonists’ palaces with ephemeral architecture and huge cartoons representing power in its traditional, though for this occasion oversized *topoi*, all for the benefit of thousands of passers-by who daily came to gape at this unaccustomed splendour. They tell of receptions in the Vatican, where each step taken, each finger raised by the main actors had been minutely discussed beforehand by the negotiators of ceremony on both sides.⁹ They also tell of the gargantuan banquets given by the Imperial ambassador and by Pope Urban’s elder nephew, Francesco Cardinal Barberini and other Church dignitaries, where the Romans tried to set new standards of culinary fashion and etiquette in insisting on the use of individual forks, knives and napkins, emphasizing the boorish manners still displayed by the Austrian and German nobles.¹⁰ And, finally, they tell of the papal *pranzo*, that was not like a normal festive meal at all, but rather aimed to present the Pope in his supreme power, as an *alter Christus*, in that he presided over the dinner offered to Prince Eckembergh as Christ had presided over the Last Supper.¹¹

⁷ See: Archivio di Stato di Roma (*ASR*), Fondo Camerale (*FC*), Series I, subseries “Entrata e Uscita del Maggiordomo”, 112/15, and Series II, subseries “Cerimoniale”, *busta* 132.

⁸ See: *BAV*, *Manoscritti Chigiani*, Vol.N II 49, ff. 512^r–573^v; Ottoboniani Latini, Vol. 2701, ff. 57^r–144^v; and: *ASR*, Archivio Santacroce (= *AS*), Vol.69, ff. 27^r–97^v, as well as chapter IV of this book.

⁹ Cfr. *BAV*, Vat. Lat., Vol. 7852, f. 448^r, sqq., and Vol.12.431, ff. 1^r–37^v.

¹⁰ See: *BAV*, Codices Reginenses, Vol. 804, f. 17b.

¹¹ I propose to deal with this aspect of papal image building in a future article.

The very fact that so many descriptions documenting this and other occasions like it—as well as often even more forcefully interpretive descriptions of paintings painted, buildings built, operas composed, plays written—are preserved at all, indicates the importance attached to ceremony and other ritualizations and visualizations of power. In the particular case of the Eckembergh-visit, one finds copies in all major European archives, probably made for the ambassadors residing in Rome, to be sent to their own courts. I would suggest that this is so precisely because these texts were needed as ‘blue prints’ for future occasions, to be consulted by all those who wanted to use them for their own policy of image building, in following the fashions set by the leaders of this theatre world—and Rome, of course, considered itself to be the leader *par excellence*. There, the pope was Christ’s Vicar on Earth, a unique sovereign, who ruled supreme both in the spiritual and the temporal realms. There, precisely by decree of Pope Urban, the cardinals, the members of the Sacred College, who had lost most of their actual political power to the supreme pontiff and his officials in the post-Tridentine period, became Princes of the Church, with precedence over all other European nobles and, indeed, sovereign princes. The rationale behind this highly criticised move¹² was to present the world with an image of a Rome that once again pretended to rule the world, in the person of the pope. His ‘Brethren in Christ’ had to be ranked with the highest nobles of the Christian states¹³ because, notwithstanding their political subjugation to his near-absolute power, they retained a highly important function: to serve both Rome and him as his courtiers. Even in music the message was proclaimed: a cantata composed for the Barberini family sang of Rome as the “*imperatrix orbis*”, and of Pope Urban as its centre.¹⁴

To many, if perhaps not to all of the people somehow affected by papal power, culture in Rome was closely associated with what they felt to be the essential spiritual values of the Catholic Church, rather than depending upon artistic and scholarly patronage in its often secular

¹² For some of the criticism, see: *ASR, AS*, Vol.69, ff. 141^r–160^v, “Breve discorso sopra l’eccesso de’ titoli nuovamente introdotti...”

¹³ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6442, f. 63^v: a letter from Francesco Ingoli, secretary of the Congregation of Rites, to Francesco Barberini, August 27, 1633.

¹⁴ Cfr. the text by G. de Totis, in: *BAV*, Manoscritti Barberini Musicali, Vol. 4364.

garb. To such persons, a defence of papal authority in general and of the dogmas of Holy Church in particular was by far the most important cultural task of the Holy See.

In the 1620's and 1630's, this argument found an ally in the reigning pontiff himself, since Urban VIII advocated the use of religious themes and *topoi* in works of art rather than of the pagan imagery that had been acceptable and even fashionable in the 16th century. Indeed, the Pope's own extensive poetical production as analysed in Chapter II of this study, was of mainly religious inspiration, both before and after his accession.

In the various editions of his *poemata*, some of which conveyed the author's message with the help of sumptuous illustrations—the 1631-version has plates after Bernini's drawings—Urban pontificated on the need to present and defend the tenets of the Church, of the Christian Faith through the means of poetry. Like a new Moses and a new David, the Pope wanted to bring mankind to salvation, admonishing the youth of Italy to eschew paganism and to serve Christ, the Deliverer descended from and risen again to Heaven, rather than Orpheus, striving after his Olympus. One should not hanker after worldly glory, as the ruins of Rome so clearly showed. The Virgin Mary, immaculately conceived, was the one person who, to Maffeo Barberini's firm belief, could help mankind find salvation. It is indicative of the restrictions of, even, papal power that in the end Maffeo, after he had become Pope Urban, did not turn his fervid convictions on this point into a Church dogma.¹⁵ Yet it is quite obvious that Urban VIII made earnest in following the precepts of Trent that Art should serve Faith.

In this context, art—perhaps better: the “*artes et scientiae*”—should be understood as, indeed, all means available to man to express emotions, to convey a message: architecture, painting, sculpture; music and literature; but also scholarship in all its forms; and, even, ritualized behaviour: the art of talking and walking, of eating, of gesticulation. The papacy, the Church had created many institutions wherein power could be made manifest and that, in a Durckheimian sense, embodied power. These institutions, therefore, served as instruments of cultural policy, employing the arts and sciences in a variety of often complex, meaning-enhancing combinations.

¹⁵ Cfr. the letter -22 July 1631- about a long poem published by the Frenchman Reviglias on the theme of the Immaculate Conception, dedicated to: “Maphaeus Barbaerinus”—a complicated way of spelling the Pope's name to allow for the anagram

Instruments of cultural policy: the court proper and the "famiglia"

As in all Europe, in Rome, too, the princely, in this case the papal court was of prime importance in establishing cultural hegemony: it was the major stage where power could be enacted and reproduced. However, despite the pre-eminence of the pope in the theatre that was Rome, to a greater or lesser extent policy at the papal court in these times was dominated by one or more of the members of the papal family as well, first, and foremost, by the pope's closest collaborator, the cardinal-*padrone*. Essentially, the functions normally entrusted to a royal family, i.e. the profane, secular, even worldly aspects of monarchical power and its presentation, in Rome fell to the papal relatives, allowing the pope to stress the spiritual origin and dimension of his authority. This, of course, was a necessity if only because, since Trent, it had become politically and propagandistically less expedient to continue the 16th-century practise of blatantly presenting papal power in its secular garb.¹⁶

Urban's personal life-style was sober, even ascetic. Nevertheless, he loved the arts and the sciences—including, as I have shown in Chapter VIII, the esoteric and occult ones—and his court was organized accordingly, if only because this was what the world expected. The Pope surrounded himself by administrative and political collaborators who often showed artistic or learned leanings as well. Thus, the man appointed to such an eminently practical position as that of papal court physician, Giulio Mancini, also was something of a learned polygraph.¹⁷ Indeed, a few days after Urban's accession, we find Francesco Stelluti, famous mathematician and member of the *Accademia dei Lincei* writing to his friend Galileo Galilei:

As You will have heard, the Pope has immediately named our [viz. his co-member of the Lincean Academy] Don Virginio Cesarini his Lord Chamberlain, while Monsignore Ciampoli not only is to continue in his office of Secretary of the Letters to the Princes, but has also been made a secret chamberlain; another of our Lincei, Mr. Dal Pozzo, esquire, will

"Urbanus Phoebus Mariae": *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6521, ff. 25^r–28^r, with the manuscript text of the poem.

¹⁶ Cfr. the perceptive essay by J. Hook, 'Urban VIII. The paradox of a spiritual monarchy', in: H. Trevor-Roper (ed.), *The Courts of Europe. Politics, Patronage and Royalty, 1400–1600* (London 1977), 213–231. Her analysis, however, was based largely on the then available literature, and, also, less systematic than would have been preferable.

¹⁷ A number of his tracts have been preserved in: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 4314–4317.

serve the Pope's nephew, the one who's going to be made a cardinal; thus, we'll have three of our Academy amongst the Palatines, besides many other friends.¹⁸

Amongst the Pope's learned entourage, one also encounters the famous poet and musicologist Giovanni Battista Doni (1593–1647), who was made Secretary of the Sacred College. This, however, was an honorific position: his actual task would be to attend to the secretarial needs of the new Cardinal-*Padrone*, young Francesco Barberini.¹⁹ Thus, employing Doni and such men as Cassiano Dal Pozzo (1588–1657), a famous classicist, to serve his nephew, Urban made it clear he was going to rely upon his nephew and the court he was going to form to uphold the reputation both of the Barberini family and of the papacy as the real leaders of contemporary culture.

Therefore, in October, 1623, Francesco, elder son of the new Pope's brother, had been elevated to the cardinalate, becoming, at the age of 26, the second person in Christendom after Christ's Vicar.²⁰ Though well-educated, as befitting the nephew of the influential and powerful cardinal Maffeo Barberini had been, he was not, of course, especially prepared for the unique task suddenly entrusted to him. Luckily, advice on how to act and behave was coming in from all kind of sources.

Seventeenth-century Rome abounds with a peculiar kind of documents that, almost, seem to constitute a genre of their own: the *avvisi* to newly-nominated cardinals and, more specifically, to the nephew of a newly-elected pope; *avvisi* that go into minute detail in spelling out what behaviour and what policy are most expedient; *avvisi*, also, that by their very existence and nature reveal to what degree the system of

¹⁸ Peralisi, *o.c.*, 69: "Come V.S. avra inteso, ha [sc. the Pope] subito dichiarato suo Maestro di Camera il nostro Sig. Don Virginio Cesarini, e Mons. Ciampolo non solo resta nel Suo luogo di segretario de' Brevi de'Prencipi, ma è fatto anco cameriero secreto, e il Signor Cavalier dal Pozzo, pur nostro Linceo, servirà il nepote del Papa, quello che sarà Cardinale, di modo che abbiamo tre Accademici Palatini, oltre molto altri amici." On Ciampoli and Cesarini: see Chapter II of this book.

¹⁹ For Doni, see: *Nouvelle Biographie Generale*, Vol. XIV, (Paris 1855, Copenhagen 1965), 555–557, as well as: Cl.V. Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought* (New Haven 1985), 330–332. Part of Doni's voluminous correspondence has been preserved in the Vatican Library: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6463. Doni was quick to offer the new cardinal his services: Doni to Barberini, August 9, 1623, *ibidem*, f. 45^r.

²⁰ For a sketch of Barberini's life, see, of course, the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (= *DBI*), 6 (Rome, 1964), 172–176. The typescript thesis of: M.G. Iodice, *Il cardinal Francesco Barberini* (Rome 1965), is of no real value. A short manuscript biography is in: *BAV, Manoscritti Urbinate Latini*, Vol. 1646, ff. 388–391. Cfr. also Chapter III of this book.

nepotism had become a structural aspect of papal power.²¹ Most important among the well-meant counsel addressed at Barberini was, I think, the very detailed memorandum I have analysed in Chapter III of this book. It spelled out everything Francesco should do to make his position stand out, even through the minutiae of his daily behaviour. Thus, the young man might feel well prepared for his task. Nor, however, was this all. He received unsought help from an unexpected source.

A few weeks after Maffeo Barberini had ascended the throne, the renowned French erudite and scholar Nicholas Fabri de Peiresc wrote a letter to the new pontiff who had been among his correspondents for some years already.²² From 1618 onwards, the then Cardinal Barberini had requested Peiresc's services to procure some of the relics of St. Mary Magdalene,²³ a saint he particularly venerated, as appears from the Latin odes composed by him in her honour. Barberini specifically craved her remains, buried in the Provence, to sanctify his splendid family chapel.

Now, in his first letter to his long-time correspondent after his elevation to the papacy, Peiresc congratulated him and told him how overjoyed he and the whole of France were. He then went on to write that particularly: 'All men of letters hope to regain some of their former position under His holy protection'.²⁴ To his Roman friend Girolamo Aleandro, an early associate of Maffeo Barberini as well, Peiresc wrote: 'One of the fruits one hopes to gain from the elevation of His Holiness to the papacy is to see virtue re-established to its ancient esteem'.²⁵ Simple phrases, that yet open up a view upon an entire world of cultural preconceptions and preconditions, for virtue, of course, did refer to Man's creative potential, indeed, to the "artes et scientiae" that, or so Peiresc felt, would now once more be honoured at the papal court.

²¹ See chapter III of my: *Pausen, Prelaten, Bureaucraten. Aspecten van de Geschiedenis van het pausschap en de Pauselijke staat in de zeventiende eeuw* (Nijmegen 1983).

²² The correspondence between Barberini and Peiresc is preserved in: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 6502, 6503. It will be published shortly by P.J.A.N. Rietbergen and Chr. Berkvens-Stevelinck.

²³ Barberini's answers to Peiresc's letters are preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale (= *BN*) in Paris, Fonds Français (= *FF*), Vol. 9537. For this letter: *BN, FF*, Vol. 9537, f. 45., Maffeo Barberini to Peiresc, Rome, 14 April 1619.

²⁴ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6502, f. 17^r; Peiresc to Maffeo Barberini, August 19, 1623, "I letterati sperano di poter ricuperare qualche credito sotto la Sua protettione santissima".

²⁵ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6504, f. 130^r: Peiresc to Aleandro, November 2, 1623, "L'uno delli frutti che si spera dell'assunzione della S.tà di N.S. al pontificato è di vedere le virtù ristabilite nell'antiqua stima".

Nor was Peiresc the only member of the ‘Republic of Letters’ to put his hope in the new Pope and his nephew. Giovanni Battista Cambiogo wrote to young Barberini rejoicing in his and his uncle’s good fortune, precisely because they could be expected to favour the “scienza sperimentale” as never before had been done.²⁶ Francesco Stelluti told Galilei: ‘The creation of the new Pope has filled us all with joy, knowing that he particularly favours men of letters; we now will have the mightiest maecenas. He [sc. the Pope] very much likes our Prince [sc. Federigo Cesi, founder and ‘Prince’, i.e. president of the Lincei]’.²⁷ The Florentine genius himself answered: ‘I’ll be extremely happy now that the hope, which already seemed totally lost, revives that we will see the most esoteric sciences and arts recalled from their long exile; I will die content knowing to have lived during the greatest success of my most beloved and revered patron [meaning Cesi]’.²⁸ These certainly were to prove prophetic words.

After the new Pope’s accession, Peiresc could no longer directly correspond with the former Maffeo Barberini. One does not write to a pope as if to an ordinary friend or acquaintance. That, at least, was the gist of the advice given to Peiresc by Aleandro. He, however, had already spoken about the Frenchman to young Barberini, and now urged his friend to pay his respects to the new Cardinal-*Padrone*.²⁹ Henceforth, all contacts went via Francesco Barberini, who acted as deputy for his uncle in all important policy matters.

At first, Peiresc, though the older of the two, seemed hesitant to speak his mind. However, after Barberini’s visit to France as *legatus a latere*, in 1625, the relationship became noticeably more informal, and we find Peiresc, albeit reverently, clearly voicing his opinions in matters of culture and, more specifically, scholarship, urging Barberini to

²⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6523, f. 12^r: Cambiogo to Francesco Barberini, September 27, 1623.

²⁷ “La creazione del nuovo Pontefice ci ha tutti rallegrati, essendo [sc. lui] fautore particolare de’letterati; onde siamo per avere un mecenate supremo. Ama [sc. the Pope] assai il nostro Sig. Principe [sc. Federigo Cesi, founder and ‘Prince’, president of the *Lincei*]”. Quoted in: S. Pieralisi, *Urbano VIII e Galileo Galilei. Memorie Storiche* (Rome 1875), 69.

²⁸ “Vivero felicissimo ravvivandosi la speranza, già del tutto sepolta, di esser per veder richiamato dal lor lungo esilio le più peregrine lettere, e morirò contento essendomi trovato vivo al più glorioso successo del più amato e reverito padrone che io avessi al mondo”: quoted in: *Pieralisi, o.c.*, 71.

²⁹ Peiresc’s worries and Aleandro’s friendly efforts can be reconstructed from their correspondence, that is preserved in the Vatican Library: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6504. For this episode: ff. 125^r, 127^r–130^r, 133^r–134^r, 147^r–148^v, 175^r–v.

take the lead in or at least promote a number of enterprises that sometimes involve scholarly cooperation from all over Europe. Meanwhile, Barberini obviously had become fully aware of Peiresc's excellent reputation in the world of learning and realised he could use him within the context of the cultural policy he was beginning to pursue.

The ensuing correspondence indicates the importance Barberini attached to Peiresc's friendship and advice. Mostly, the Cardinal-*Padrone* did not deign to answer any letters with long epistles of his own writing, only acknowledging the receipt and leaving details to his secretaries. However, he did answer Peiresc, in often great detail. Indeed, it is significant that among the thousands of Barberini letters, no correspondence exists that even remotely matches the Barberini-Peiresc exchange, both in quality and in quantity.

In this epistolary, that only was closed with Peiresc's death in 1637, the French erudite repeatedly voiced an opinion that, to a 20th-century analyst, offers an important clue to the function of patronage, one of the key concepts regulating cultural life and policy in 17th-century Rome. Peiresc continuously stresses the fact that the patronage of scholarship will be of the greatest advantage to the papacy in general, and to the fame of the Barberini in particular. In this context, it is somewhat disconcerting to read Peiresc's rather disparaging judgement in a letter to his friend Claude Menestrier, in which he writes that the Cardinal "quoy que grand-seigneur, (il) n'a pas l'intelligence telle qu'il faudroit de la valeur des choses."³⁰ Yet, Barberini esteemed his friend's contribution: as I will show, when Peiresc died in 1637, he paid for the publication of a series of poems in his praise, though, cleverly, using the occasion to sing Rome's praises as well.

Peiresc's counsel, stressing the need to advance the cause of learning, must have reinforced the ideas about a strategy of religious propaganda policy through the advancement of specific types of scholarship laid down in an anonymous memorandum presented to Urban's nephew in the 1620s. Given the fact that Francesco was himself genuinely inclined towards the arts and sciences, during the entire pontificate of his uncle the Cardinal-*Padrone* pursued a course of grandiose cultural policy, of image building or propaganda, concentrating, I feel, more on intellectual and, generally speaking, scholarly culture than on artistic

³⁰ Peiresc to Menestrier, February 1636, in: Tamizey, *o.c.*, Vol. V (Paris 1894), 789.

patronage. Soon, the courts of Urban's nephews—for, led by Francesco, his brothers Taddeo and Antonio followed his example—shone with great brilliance.

While the Pope's public image mainly manifested itself within the ceremonial context of his life in St. Peter's and the Vatican Palace, conducted according to an age-old ritual rhythm, from the early 1630's onwards the Cardinal-*Padrone* held court both on the splendid stage of the Cancellaria Palace, on the Via Papalis, and in the recently-completed Barberini Palace at the Quattro Fontane, meant as the permanent residence of his brother Taddeo, Prefect of Rome and his family, as well as, after the latter's return to the older Barberini Palace on Via dei Gubbonari, of the third Barberini brother, Cardinal Antonio, the Younger. An artistic monument of prime importance in the creation of the Roman version of the Baroque style in architecture and interior decoration, the new Barberini Palace also was a meeting-place for visitors from all over Europe, as well as, of course, a hotbed of intrigue, of faction-strife, of scheming for power and position amongst the host of courtiers, politicians, foreign diplomats and idle hangers-on who constantly assembled there if they were not dancing attendance on the Pope himself.

Both Cardinal Francesco and his younger brother Antonio, who came to be a munificent patron in his own right, liberally admitted men of culture to their residences, keeping a free table in the princely manner—precisely as Francesco had been advised to do by his anonymous counsellor. The theatre-like quality of life in Rome, in the new palace as well as in the other dwellings of the papal family, was further enhanced with the opening of Rome's first modern opera house, added to the new palace in 1632.

From the early months of 1624 onwards, and again following the advice given to him, we find young Francesco Barberini creating a household, a *famiglia* of his own, that, over the years, came to consist of some 500 persons.³¹ Of course, most of these were menial servants, only. A number, however, were highly qualified and often internationally respected artists and scholars. They were part of the group described as the "Gentilhuomini dell'Eminentissimo Cardinale Barberino". They were men like Girolamo Aleandro (1574–1629), famous archaeologist,

³¹ See: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 5635, ff. 91^r–93^r, as well as *BAV*, Archivio Barberini (= *AB*), Series IV, nr. 871.

poet and polemic,³² who had first served Cardinal Bandini. On the Pope's specific request, he was 'handed over' by this Eminency to serve as Barberini's first secretary.³³ They were men, also, like Cassiano Dal Pozzo.³⁴ Though his official function was that of First Gentleman of the Papal Bedchamber, as Stelluti's letter cited above indicated he really was meant to enter Francesco's court, where his renown, that rested both on his scholarship in such fields as archaeology and botany and on his own extensive patronage of the arts and sciences,³⁵ would enhance the international stature of the Cardinal

Of course, it was the first task of these courtiers to either, as in the case of Aleandro, answer the letters of the many hundreds of persons who annually petitioned Barberini for some kind of favour, material or spiritual, or, as in the case of Dal Pozzo, to serve as a kind of scholar-in-attendance, a man who through his own fame served as intermediary between the Cardinal-*Padrone* and the world of learning. Amongst the men writing to Barberini, we find dozens of scholars from all over Christendom offering their services and the products of their scholarship. Thus, Aleandro pens encouraging notes to men like Sigismondo Boldoni, medical scholar and poet from Padua; to Paganino Gaudenzio, classicist and legal scholar from Pisa; to Balthasar Moretus, learned printer from Antwerp; and to Petrus Bertius and Erycius Puteanus, famous Humanists from the Low Countries.³⁶

In Rome, men like Aleandro and Dal Pozzo had their own cultural circle as well. Dal Pozzo's *museum* in his palace in the Via de'Chiavari was a well-known gathering place for the Roman and the international

³² For Aleandro, see: *DBI*, 2 (Rome 1960), 135–136. Cfr. for an edition of a sizeable collection of Aleandro's letters: L.G. Pelissier, 'Les amis d'Holstenius' in: *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome VIII* (1888), 323–402, 521–608.

³³ Pieralisi, *o.c.*, 37.

³⁴ For Dal Pozzo, see: *DBI*, 32 (Rome 1986), pp. 209–212. A voluminous *carteggio* of Dal Pozzo's letters is preserved in the library of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, in Rome. See: A. Nicolò, *Il Carteggio di Cassiano dal Pozzo. Catalogo* (Firenze 1991). For further information: C. Dati, *Delle lodi del commendatore Cassiano dal Pozzo* (Firenze 1664) and: G. Lumbroso, 'Notizie sulla vita di Cassiano dal Pozzo', in: *Miscellanea di storia Italiana XV* (1874), 131–388, as well as: F. Salinas, ed., *Cassiano dal Pozzo. Atti del Seminario internazionale di Studi* (Rome 1989).

³⁵ See the contributions in: E. Cropper, G. Perini, F. Salinas, eds., *Documentary Culture. Florence and Rome from Grandduke Ferdinand I to Pope Alexander VII* (Bologna 1992).

³⁶ Aleandro's letters written in his capacity as secretary of Francesco Barberini are in: *BAV, BL*, Vols.1937, 1938, 1939, 1988 and 2053, *passim*.

cultural set, where a painter like Nicholas Poussin used to study, and where works of art by Gianlorenzo Bernini, Pietro da Cortona and François Duquesnoy were shown.

Obviously, Barberini's secretary and his other erudite *famigliari* also had an international network of correspondents and contacts³⁷ because their friendship was much coveted by persons seeking access to one of the mightiest men in Christendom. The communication system being what it was, their many letters often were read widely outside the private circles of their recipients. In these letters as well as, of course, in the fulsomely laudatory introductions to their published works, they praised their patron for his munificence and protection. The word spread. The international reputation of the Barberini *famigliari* proved an indispensable means in building the Barberini's image as Rome's greatest patrons ever, the ones who restored the city to its ancient position as the major centre of culture and learning in the Christian world.

Instruments of cultural policy: the moral enchantment of religious music

For the carnival season of the year 1631, the Barberini family, headed by Cardinal Francesco, commissioned the composer Stefano Landi (1587–1639) to write an opera, to be performed in one of the rooms of their palace in Via dei Gubbonari. Landi, who had studied at the German College, and was attached to the household of the Cardinal of Savoy, had composed several volumes of sacred and secular music, as well as a nuptial mass for the wedding, in 1628, of Taddeo Barberini to Anna Colonna. The first musical drama he had written, in 1619, had been an *Orfeo*, solidly set in the tradition of the mostly mythical subjects usually taken for early opera. In the 1620's, however, the Medici in Florence had turned to religious topics, presenting their foreign visitors with lavishly produced sacred operas—among them a *Giuditta* dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Barberini. Now, Cardinal Francesco himself asked one of his uncle's courtiers, Giulio Rospigliosi—a scion of a noble Roman family, a man well-known for his good taste in literature, a man, incidentally, who later became Pope Clement IX—to write the text for such a religious drama to be set to music and performed

³⁷ See, e.g., J.Fr. Lhote (ed.), *Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc. Lettres à Cassiano dal Pozzo, 1626–1637* (Paris 1990).

in his own residence. When the curtain lifted on its first night, the aristocratic audience enjoyed Landi's musical setting of the religious melodrama *Sant'Alessio*, a piece that strictly adhered to the Pope's well-known preference for art with an ethical-religious message.

The *Sant'Alessio* tells the story of a young Roman nobleman who abandoned his wife and family, his wealth and his social position to enter upon a life of Christian asceticism in the Near East.³⁸ When his relatives are informed of his whereabouts, they anxiously set out in search for him, not knowing he has returned to Rome and is living right under their nose, the pious but much-mocked mendicant crouching at the feet of the stairs of the family palace. Alexis constantly is being tempted by the Devil and his demons, who try to persuade him to leave his chosen life and return to his family—the Devil employing arguments closely resembling the ones Goethe later used to convince his *Faust*. Rospigliosi's libretto shows wealth and honour, but also family love and marital bliss to be traps set by Man's attachment to the world, that keep Man from his true vocation—in an obvious echo of the central theme in many of Pope Urban's own poems. Indeed, throughout the work, and the many serious religious opera's written by Rospigliosi during the following years, everything tending towards the glorification of the world and all it offered is denied; world-weariness, resignation and even disillusion hold the stage, both literally and figuratively speaking. The texts produced by Rospigliosi induced the composers with whom he worked to devise various ways to match words and music to such an extent that the complex message could be easily followed by the audience, with intricate changes in harmony showing the emotional changes in the protagonists. Especially the recitative soliloquy proved a most effective instrument.³⁹

On 'the battlefield of his heart', Alexis continues to struggle to keep his self-imposed promise to forsake the World, bewailing God's silence.

³⁸ *Il S. Alessio. Dramma musicale dall'eminentissimo, et reverendissimo signor Card. Barberino, fatto rappresentare al serenissimo prencipe Alessandro Carlo di Polonia, dedicato a sua eminenza, e posto in musica da Stefano Landi Romano, musico della capella di N.S., chierico beneficato nella basilica di S. Pietro* (Rome 1634). See also: Chapter IV of this book. The discussion by: Fr. Hammond, *Music and Spectacle in baroque Rome. Barberini Patronage under Urban VIII* (New Haven 1994), 200–201, is rather disappointing. Indeed, a study of the ideology underlying the various Rospigliosi-text books might still be rewarding.

³⁹ M. Murata, 'The Recitative Soliloquy', in: *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 32 (1979), 52–62.

In the end, an Angel from Heaven appears, announcing Alexis' victory over life, over the Devil, through his imminent death, and, consequently, his salvation. 'O welcome death', he sings, as this musical illustration of the lesson from Matthew, 19:29, is made clear to the audience. 'No heart finds respite on earth from its thousand torments. Whoever seeks the Sun should not chase after shadows.' Man's voyage, made so difficult because it leads him through the numerous, seductive attachments of this world, has one loadstar, only. That is the message of Religion, which now attends on Alexis, who, though being no warrior like many ancient Romans, as the prologue had made clear, yet deserves a triumphal entry equal to the one offered to them when they returned from war. Appearing on a cloud-borne chariot, Religion sings: 'Only I point out the pole-star for your journey'. Bereft of their loved-one, Alexis' relatives realize they have been blind, looking for the wrong person, not seeing their son and husband as he really was. They also acknowledge he now has entered Heaven's harbour, Man's true destination.

The text introducing the fifth scene of the third Act tells that on earth, Alexis is buried in the building formerly used as a temple to Hercules: obviously, the audience was supposed to feel that Man will find peace through submission to God's will, not through war. The spectators, among who, during the 1632-performance, was the Emperor's ambassador Hans Ulrich, first Prince Eckembergh, were made to realize that the terrible war that was destroying Europe should be ended, and that Religion, Rome, the Pope, could be an instrument of peace.

In the last scenes, the chorus of Angels once more proclaims the drama's central message to the audience: if they pursue piety, they, too, will be crowned with eternal glory.

This first full-blown Barberini opera certainly was a true triumph for the moral-religious policy which Pope Urban advocated, with which he hoped to restore Rome's erstwhile supremacy—in the opening scenes, Rome had been shown as the queen of men's hearts, the kind of dominion she prized above all other: she frees the slaves who sit at her feet, repenting of the times when she dominated the world and mankind with the force of arms, telling them that following Christ will bring them an everlasting empire. The former slaves now joyfully turn to Rome of their own will: 'Because you now are dedicated to Christ, unfurling the great standard of the Cross with peaceful rule, you now are a conqueror whom we adore with cheerful voices, the queen of our devoted hearts.'

It was a scene that, with some seven others from the opera, was illustrated in a series of engravings made by François Collignon and published separately from the text-book sometime in 1634. For in that year, the opera had been set within a magnificent scenography designed by Pietro da Cortona for another special occasion, the visit of an illustrious guest from Poland, Alexander Charles Wasa, brother to the Polish King Vladislav whom Rome looked upon as one of its most important allies in the ongoing war. With the lavish, bee-studded publication of the score, presenting both the libretto and the music, the booklet with the engravings served to preserve the memory of this “Gesamtkunstwerk”, the first of a number of sacred dramas staged by the Barberini as instruments of propaganda over the next ten years.

However, the 1634-production also shows the versatility of this instrument. A new prologue had been added reflecting the changed circumstances both of the papacy and of the European scene at large. In Rome, Galilei had been condemned, an act which had considerably tarnished the Barberini’s glory as professed patrons of the sciences and hence had earned them much criticism in the Republic of Letters. Unlike most contemporary intellectuals, a man like Peiresc had not failed to openly voice this criticism, asking Cardinal Francesco to at least show clemency in the alleged harsh treatment meted out to the old scientist. Francesco answered that, as a member of the Sacred College, he could not very well allow himself to react. Peiresc persisted in his criticism. In a rather breathtakingly courageous letter, he told the Cardinal that the honour and reputation not only of the Barberini family but of the papacy itself were at stake. He even went as far as comparing the present situation with that in ancient Athens, where Socrates had been the victim of a judicial murder. And this to the all-powerful nephew of the supreme pontiff.

Cardinal Francesco did not reply.⁴⁰ But I feel the new prologue to the *Sant’Alessio* did, in a way. On the one hand it showed the ascendancy of the Jesuits, who had staged Galilei’s downfall; they were being hailed as the bulwark of Catholic Christendom in the North, the ones who were going to save these lands for the Faith. And King Vladislav,

⁴⁰ Cfr. F. Hammond, ‘The artistic patronage of the Barberini and the Galilei Affair’, in: V. Coelho, ed., *Music and Science in the Age of Galilei* (Dordrecht 1992), 67–89; and, for the Peiresc-letters: Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, December 5, 1635, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, ff. 109^{r-v}, as well as the edition in: A. Favaro, ed., *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei* (Florence 1890–1909), Vol. XVI, 169–171; 187; 202.

though hailed as a hero, too, was implicitly criticised for not showing that obedience to Rome's orthodoxy which was seemly—amongst other things, he continued to protect Pope Urban's favourite, the poet Ciampoli, who had shared his friend Galilei's fate. But yet the major message was that of the absolute prince's clemency. Indeed, the terms of Galilei's imprisonment were changed. Not surprisingly, Cardinal Francesco made sure to send his friend Peiresc the revised text of this very opera.⁴¹

Instruments of cultural policy: the academies

In his letters to Cardinal Barberini, Peiresc could not but use the warmest words to laud Barberini's cultural initiatives, whether structural or *ad hoc*. Thus, he greatly applauded Francesco's decision to found an academy.⁴² Obviously, the idea was not original. There had been academies in Rome for many years already. The Barberini Academy started its proceedings with readings of poetry and discussions of moral, philosophical and esthetical issues in 1624, and, after the completion of the Palazzo Barberini, convened in its oval *galleria*. Its establishment obviously followed the advice given to Francesco in the memoranda presented to him when he first accepted the responsibilities entrusted to him by his uncle. The *Accademia Barberiniana* quickly became a focal point of Roman cultural life. But its reputation soon spread beyond the papal capital and greatly helped to secure the reputation of the Barberini Palace not only as an attraction for pleasure seekers, but as a meeting-place for scholars from all over Europe. When in Rome, such men as the famous Dutch Latin scholar Daniel Heinsius, and the famous English poet John Milton were immediately invited to join the group for an evening.

Barberini promoted another academy as well, the *Accademia Basiliense*, so called because it convened in the monastery of the Basilian Fathers. His own secretary, Giovanni Battista Doni, served as its administrator. Precisely through Doni's influence, the members of this Academy frequently listened to his and others' learned discourses on the quality of

⁴¹ Peiresc to Marin Mersenne, in: C. de Waard, ed., *Correspondence du P. Marin Mersenne* (Paris 1933–1977), Vol. V, 328–329, where Peiresc asks Mersenne 'to publicly laud the poor cardinal a bit'—which Mersenne duly did.

⁴² Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, July 4, 1636, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, f. 182^v.

ancient, Greek, monodic music as contrasted with modern polyphony. Moreover, Doni not only constructed new instruments to perform this music on, he also dedicated various treatises concerning this complex matter to his patron; in the 18th century, they were compiled with a number of his writings in this field under the apt title *Lyra Barberina*.⁴³

Besides listening to musical scholarship and, one may assume, to some actual music as well, the Academy's members, such men as Lucas Holste and the erudite custodian of the Vatican Library Leone Allacci, mainly discussed questions concerning the disputes and controversies that separated the Latin and the Greek Churches.⁴⁴ As the issues discussed in the Basilian Academy were of theological as well as political importance, we once again find that scholarship and power were closely related. Obviously, any increase in Rome's authority over the Churches following the Greek rites would give the papacy a firmer foothold in the Ottoman Empire. Men like Peiresc were well aware of this link, too, as appeared when, through Barberini's librarian Holstenius, Peiresc suggested to Barberini the foundation of an academy for the oriental languages.⁴⁵

Instruments of cultural policy: relations with the Christian Near East

As the indisputable 'land of origin', the Near East was of great religious, and hence political and scholarly importance to European, Christian culture and to the Church as its defender and interpreter, the more so since the Holy Land still was the destination of considerable numbers of pilgrims, whose interests were dear to the Church and therefore had to be guarded. Nor should we forget that as far as Catholic conquests were concerned, to the papacy this area in a way offered greater possibilities than Europe itself; there, the influence of Rome, after the loss of many states to the Reformation, now was waning in the great, centralised

⁴³ A.F. Gori, ed., *Lyra Barberina*, I-II (Florence 1763). On the background: A.E. Meyer, *Musica Scientia. Musical Scholarship in the Italian Renaissance* (Ithaca 1992), 199sq., and: Cl.V. Palisca, 'Die Jahrzehnte um 1600 in Italien', in: F. Zamminer, ed., *Geschichte der Musiktheorie, VII. Italienische Musik im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt 1989), 221-306.

⁴⁴ Barberini's great interest in the reunion of the two Catholic Churches is shown in: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 2607, 4729. See also: V. Peri, 'La Congregazione dei Greci e i suoi primi documenti', in: *Studia Gregoriana* Vol. XIII (1967), pp. 131-256, and his: 'Chiesa Latina e Chiesa Greca nell'Italia posttridentina', in: *La Chiesa Greca in Italia dall'VIII al XVII secolo* (Padova 1973), 271-464.

⁴⁵ Peiresc to Holste, 31 July 1636, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6505, f. 131^v.

monarchies that had preserved their allegiance to the pope: the Holy Roman emperor and the kings of France and Spain constantly strove to limit direct interference from Rome in their religious policies. Moreover, with Italy—specifically Spanish Sicily and the Papal States—one of the first and easiest targets of Ottoman military power, that, at least in the early 17th century, still was quite strong, the Near East, the territory that was the Turks' main economic base, was a target not only for European military action, but also of economic expansion. For all these reasons, the interest of the Holy See in the Eastern Mediterranean easily can be termed intense indeed.⁴⁶ As the two leading Barberini men, Maffeo and Francesco, were the embodiment of this interest in all its aspects, their policies considerably contributed to the perennial, and complex cultural interaction between the world of Europe and the Levant.

Rome's role in this interaction had been institutionalised in the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, created in 1622 by Gregory XV, Urban's immediate predecessor. It now was greatly supported both by him and his nephew. Though the Congregation's field was as wide as the world, undeniably the Eastern Mediterranean was one of its most important target areas. There, too, its actions showed a fascinating fusing of scholarship and politics.

Almost as if Peiresc had read the anonymous memorandum directed to young Barberini in 1623, he stressed the fact that the Congregation should particularly promote all kinds of publications that would help to ensure the greater effectiveness of its aims. Playing up to Barberini's known predilection for things oriental, and hinting at the undisputed relevance of furthering scholarship in this field to the religious policy and the power of Rome, Peiresc tried to interest the Cardinal in having scholars compile and then publish oriental dictionaries and other relevant texts, always with the argument that such undertakings would greatly increase Barberini's prestige.⁴⁷ As the Cardinal had become a member of the Congregation, he could easily influence his fellow-members to adopt such policies as advocated by Peiresc.

⁴⁶ See for a case involving most of the persons in this book: P.J. Rietbergen, 'The Making of a 'Syncretic Saint'? Cultural Integration in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Early Seventeenth Century', in: *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome*, LVII (1998), 209–228.

⁴⁷ E.g. Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, 9 December 1636, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, ff. 188^r–189^v.

Thus, Francesco strongly supported the translation of the Vulgate into Arabic and Armenian and the publication of texts about the Ethiopian Church or of the canons of the early, general councils that showed the fundamental unity of the Latin and the Greek rites.⁴⁸ He also realized the value of Peiresc's advice that, as a necessary preliminary, the numerous missionaries sent all over the world should be treated as members of one, huge, scientific expedition, charged with probing the secrets of life past and present, in all its possible forms. The results, brought back to Rome, should then be made available to the world of learning, once again to the greater glory of the Church and the Barberini.

A person whose cultural standing in this field of learning could, according to Peiresc, be turned to good account by the Barberini was the German Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher (1601–1680), whom he recommended for special attention as well.⁴⁹ Thus, Peiresc was instrumental in bringing Kircher to Rome where, in the years following 1633, the Jesuit produced some of his most remarkable works: a dictionary and a number of treatises on the Coptic script and its relation to the ancient, mysterious and mystical hieroglyphs, as well as a great book on China, both contributing in no mean way to the fame of the Barberini court.⁵⁰

Peiresc's many contacts in the Levant also encompassed the world of Maronite scholarship, especially dear to Rome because the Maronites were considered the political and religious allies *par excellence* of the papacy in the Near East. Obviously with an eye to increase his own status with the Maronite community and, perhaps, his chances of acquiring the manuscripts and antiquities he craved, Peiresc, who was even more of a collector than his cardinal-friend in Rome, did not hesitate to advocate the cause of the learned archbishop Giorgio Amira. He was a biblical scholar of high repute living in the Lebanon who had fallen on bad times when he no more received the pension former popes had accorded him. Peiresc quickly notified Barberini, again using the argument of propaganda. Barberini's own interest in the

⁴⁸ Barberini's policy in the Propaganda is clearly outlined in his correspondence with Francesco Ingoli, the Propaganda's secretary: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6442, ff. 1^r–97^r.

⁴⁹ *Idem*, *Ibidem*. Cfr. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, f. 60^r, Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, September 10, 1633.

⁵⁰ Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, September 10, 1633, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, f. 60. Cfr. on Kircher's career chapter VIII of this book.

affairs of the Eastern Churches ensured an equally quick reaction: payment of Amira's pension was resumed, and Rome's reputation with the Maronites and, indeed, all Christians in the Holy Land, bolstered up again.⁵¹

Admittedly, Barberini did not really need Peiresc's gentle prompting, as is shown in the case of another oriental scholar of Maronite descent, Abraham Ecchellen.⁵² In 1619, he arrived in Rome, to study there. After a series of highly interesting vicissitudes, in 1636 he received a professorship at the *Sapienza*, nominated thereunto by Pope Urban himself. According to Peiresc, who was interested in Ecchellen's Arabic manuscripts, Holste, and, thus, Barberini had a hand in this promotion.⁵³ However, as Ecchellen's fame spread, Cardinal Richelieu, France's prime minister, who had both a cultural and a political interest in the Lebanon, made haste to lure him to France, to work on the Polyglot Bible and related projects of great scholarly and propagandistic prestige, that helped to buttress French power both in the Orient and in the Occident. Alarmed, supposedly, by this move by one of Rome's most important rivals for the role of Europe's cultural leader and of defender of Christianity in the Near East, Barberini almost ordered Ecchellen to return to the Eternal City, to come and work for the Propaganda Fide.⁵⁴

Ecchellen stayed for three years, basking in the favour now shown to him by the Cardinal-*Padrone*. Nevertheless, in 1645 he once more returned to France, undoubtedly attracted by the fine conditions offered to him by the new prime minister, Cardinal Mazarin, but also on account of the fact that with the death of Pope Urban in 1644, circumstances in Rome had changed for the worse. Not only had his patron, the now ex-Cardinal-*Padrone*, left for Paris as well, also, Urban's successor, Innocent X, if not an enemy of learned culture, certainly was considered no lover of the arts and sciences. Actually, many bemoaned the fact that in his pontificate, the Muses left Rome again.

⁵¹ Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, September 22, November 3, 1633, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, ff. 68^{r-v}, 70^r.

⁵² On Ecchellen's career, see Chapter VII of this book.

⁵³ Peiresc to Holste, July 31, 1636, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6505, ff. 131^r–132^v.

⁵⁴ Cfr. the letters printed in: *Antiquitates Ecclesiae Orientalis Clarissimorum Virorum Card. Barberini (...) enucleatae* (London 1680) pp. 298sq., as well as: *ASR*, Fondo Cartari-Febei, Vol. 64, ff. 23^r–27^r, 69^r–81^v.

Instruments of cultural policy: the 'protectorates' and the national colleges

As Rome gained increasing importance as the centre of the Catholic Church in the late 15th and in the 16th century, many 'nations'—basically understood as people sharing the same language(s)—felt the need of some kind of permanent presence or representation in the papal capital. In the following century, especially if normal, diplomatic relations between a given state and the papacy did not or no longer exist as, for example, in the case of post-Reformation England and Scotland, the Catholic elites of such states continued to favour these institutions. On the level of the Curia, it became customary to establish a link between Rome and a given nation in the person of an influential cardinal—if possible the reigning pope's nephew—who acted as the nation's 'protector' and to whom persons, individually or collectively, might have recourse if problems crept up. The cardinals chosen for this role usually were quite proud of the honour, as it enhanced their prestige in no mean way, and even might give them some extra political leverage. Also, the protectorates brought them considerable extra income.

Conversely, if Rome felt its influence in an area to be less than desired, it might seek to increase its authority by establishing a college where young men belonging to a certain nation were trained for the priesthood, and then sent as missionaries to their homeland. This, of course, often occurred when a state was ruled by a prince who did no longer obey Rome. These colleges, too, needed a protector. If they were connected to a specific nation the national protector would guard over the interests and the well-functioning of the college as well.

Soon after it became obvious that he would be the new Cardinal-*Padrone*, Francesco Barberini found himself beseeched to accept the protectorate of, amongst other nations, the English, the Scots, the Germans, the Hungarians, the Greek and the Maronites, accepting, also, the responsibility for their colleges. As the archives show, this was no mere honorary position. Besides receiving visitors from the countries involved at his table, and listening to their pleas, the affairs of the colleges took up quite some time. However, he and his collaborators must have felt this to be time well spent because, of course, the quality of the teaching⁵⁵ could considerably influence the effectiveness of the clergy, and, thus, the political presence in a given region.

⁵⁵ See, among documents pertaining to the Collegio Germanico and the Collegio Greco, an example in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6551, f. 40^r, sqq.

The complexity of the issues involved is shown by the case of the Greek Orthodox Church, a powerful institution in the Near East if only because so many Greek Christians held key-functions in the Ottoman economy. Well aware of the importance of some kind of union between the Latin and the Greek Church, Urban tried to increase his hold over the Eastern Church by giving a new impulse to studies at Rome's Greek College, to which end he re-organised it, already in 1624.⁵⁶ Soon, the Greek College became an important instrument in the battle between Rome and Protestant Europe to gain power over the Orthodox Church, and, thus, over political and economic life in the Eastern Mediterranean.

During Urban's reign, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Cyrillus Lucaris (1572–1637), who, according to many, had irregularly taken the place of Patriarch Athanasius, proceeded to foster heretical teachings, more and more leaning towards Geneva rather than to Rome. Obviously, the Dutch and the English—"i ricchi mercanti heretici"—were overjoyed to thus albeit indirectly increase their influence in the Ottoman Empire. The Orthodox clergy, afraid the grand vizier would confiscate their extensive landed properties, hoped these foreign powers would intervene on their behalf.⁵⁷ The Northern European merchant states stimulated the process by flooding the Greek Church with the propagandistic products of their printing presses.

Rome, therefore, decided to launch a campaign for the reinstatement of Athanasius, who, in 1635, took refuge in Italy. Landing in Ancona, he was received by the famous Orientalist scholar Father Orazio Giustiniani. After having reached Rome, he swore fealty to the pope. Consequently, he was given support in manpower and money before returning to Istanbul. In later years, he corresponded with Cardinal Barberini about various possibilities to counter the Protestant influence in the Near East.⁵⁸ Hoping to strengthen the ties between the Orthodox Church and Rome, Barberini asked such specialists among his learned entourage as Leone Allacci to delve into the history of the relationship between the two Churches, and investigate whether ritual differences could be healed by compromises wrought by the Congregation of Rites.⁵⁹ Indeed, Cardinal Francesco was at the heart of this affair,

⁵⁶ On the Greek College, see: A. Fyrigos, ed., *Il Collegio Greco di Roma. Ricerche sugli alunni, la direzione, l'attività* [= *Analecta Collegii Graecorum I*] (Rome 1985).

⁵⁷ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4729, fols. 451^r–455^v.

⁵⁸ The documents are in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 7815.

⁵⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 4729, fols. 451^r–452^r. Notes by Allacci on the traditional unity of the Churches: *BAV, Manoscritti Borgiani Latini*, Vol. 478.

that centred around the Greek College in Rome;⁶⁰ he decided to fight his enemies with their own weapons, backing up his policy with an avalanche of publications.

Meanwhile, ex-pupils of the Greek college went out in search of information on the situation in the Ottoman Empire that, in the form of *avvisi*, was sent back to Rome. Also, they hunted for the precious Greek manuscripts that Barberini wanted for his library, if only because, in some cases, they were needed to prepare the texts—scholarly and propagandistic and, often, both—that Rome used in defence of or to enhance its religious power.⁶¹

*Instruments of cultural policy: the Vatican
Library and the Barberini Library*

Thus, we enter the realm of books and, therefore, should return to the libraries that, during the first decades of the 17th century, held pride of place, not only in Rome but in the world of Christian culture at large: the Vatican Library and the Barberini Library.

The *Vaticana*, of course, had been one of the world's major libraries ever since its foundation at the end of the 15th century. The very fact that all during the 16th and 17th centuries the popes took care to give the post of cardinal-librarian to their *nipoti* whenever a vacancy occurred, indicates the importance given to this institution as a repository of knowledge and, hence, power, and as an instrument of cultural policy. When, in 1624, Cardinal Cobellucci, the acting librarian, died, Pope Urban immediately grasped this opportunity to give the position to his nephew, with the emoluments and benefits that went with it—among which a beautiful set of rooms in the Vatican Palace. Henceforth, all scholars in Europe, whether they be Roman Catholic or Protestant, knew they had to court Cardinal Barberini, as his were the keys that unlocked this treasure trove.

Next in importance amongst those who held these keys was, of course, the first custodian, responsible for the library's daily management. In 1625, the acting custodian Luigi Alemanni fell ill. Francesco Barberini, the new Cardinal-Librarian, as if to heed the advice given

⁶⁰ Cfr. the documents pertaining to the Greek College in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2607.

⁶¹ See, e.g., some documents on manuscript hunting, et cetera, in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6551, ff. 35^r, 38^r.

him by his anonymous counsellor, asked the Oratorian Orazio Giustiniani to take over. As befitting someone who had access to all the relevant primary sources, he was given a research task as well. Significantly, he was supposed to continue the famous *Annales Ecclesiastici*, that scholarly history of the Church turned policy-instrument against the Reformation that had been first started by Cardinal Baronius.⁶²

Both Cardinal Barberini and Pope Urban fully recognized that the Vatican Library gave them a decided advantage, not only in supplying the material necessary to construct the arms of written propaganda, but also as a bait to lure scholars of all kind of religious persuasion to Rome and, thus, if possibly, to the Roman cause. Such conversions as, for example, Lucas Holste's may well have been influenced partly by reasons of scholarly opportunity. Peiresc, in his correspondence with Francesco Barberini, more than once suggested that famous Protestant scholars like Daniel Heinsius and J.J. Scaliger should be treated favourably in the matter of research material, implying this would not harm the Roman cause.

Pope Urban, while still a cardinal, had begun to form a book collection of his own, in the long tradition of cardinals' libraries that had been an important feature of Roman intellectual life since the 15th century. When he gained the papacy, it fell to his nephew to continue his work. Young Barberini's passion for books easily exceeded even that of his uncle, who, however, indulged him in every way possible. Repeatedly, small or great gifts of books entered young Francesco's collection. Many of these fell into papal hands through the judicious exercise of the right of spoils, that allowed the popes to confiscate the possessions of priests who died intestate, or had given in to practises contrary to Canon Law.⁶³ The donation and subsequent transfer of all doubles of the Vatican Library to Francesco greatly increased the Barberini collection as well.⁶⁴

In 1638, Barberini was granted the right to take one copy of every book printed by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, easily one of Rome's most productive presses.⁶⁵ Also, with the huge

⁶² Cfr. Giustiniani to Costantino Gaetani, July 24, 1626, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6464, f. 88^{r-v}. On Baronius and the *Annales* see, also: P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Printing Baronius's "Annales Ecclesiastici"', Rome 1588–1607 in: *Quaerendo*, 13 (1983), 87–102.

⁶³ Cfr. *BAV, AB*, Indice II, Vols. 288–290, 292–293.

⁶⁴ Cfr. *BAV, AB*, Indice II, Vol. 291.

⁶⁵ Cfr. *BAV, AB*, Indice II, Vol. 301.

financial means now at his disposal—in a few years' time, the Cardinal-*Padrone* became one of the wealthiest dignitaries of the Roman Church⁶⁶—he embarked upon a worldwide search for old and rare books and for precious manuscripts.⁶⁷ Helped by the contacts of his first adviser in library matters, Gabriel Naudé, as well as by the networks of his other learned *famigliari*, he was able systematically to spot new editions, good buys, and beautiful copies. Hence, the collection grew rapidly.

The first keeper of this beautiful library was Giovanni Maria Suares, a learned priest who, too, corresponded with scholars all over Christendom, mostly in the field of Church History. In 1636, he was given the bishopric of Vaison, under the dominion of Avignon, the papal enclave in the South of France that was administered by Barberini himself: another example of the Cardinal acting on advice given at an earlier date? Even after his departure from Rome, Suares continued to spend quite a lot of his episcopal time in searching for books to enrich Barberini's library.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, in 1627, a young German had entered the Cardinal's household through the recommendation of, amongst others, Aleandro and Peiresc. According to Lucas Holste's one-time French patron,⁶⁹ the youthful scholar's conversion to Catholicism and his international reputation would guarantee his useful employment. When, in 1636, Barberini decided to appoint Holste to the function of custodian of his by then famous library—once more heeding the advice given him in the various memoranda he had been reading—Peiresc hastened to assure the Cardinal of the European importance of this promotion.⁷⁰

From that moment onwards, the campaign to make the Biblioteca Barberiniana second only to the Vatican Library was intensified.⁷¹ This was made all the easier as the Vatican Library itself was less than

⁶⁶ Barberini's wealth can be reconstructed on the basis of the documents in: *BAV, AB*, Indice I, Vols. 677–792 bis; cfr. Chapter III of this book.

⁶⁷ On the genesis of the library see the documents in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 9853, and in: *BAV, AB*, Series II, Vols. 288 et cetera, 317, 872.

⁶⁸ Several volumes of letters from and to Suares have been preserved in the Vatican Library: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 6517 (Barberini to Suares), 6482 (Suares to Barberini), 3001 (Suares to other scholars).

⁶⁹ On Holste, see Chapter VI of this book.

⁷⁰ Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, July 31, 1636, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, f. 186r.

⁷¹ The collection was described in an inventory made by Holste, and published after Barberini's death: L. Holste (ed.), *Index bibliothecae quam Franciscus Barberinus magnificentissimas suae familiae ad Quirinalem aedes magnificentiores reddidit* (Rome 1681).

hospitable to visitors, as Holste noted. Indeed, it was almost impossible to gain access to the oldest public library in Christendom. One suspects that the Pope, and certainly his nephew, knowing there was really not much they could do about improving its function, short of creating a huge row with its nearly hibernating staff, gladly resorted to the enlargement of their own library, whose fame would benefit both the Church and themselves.

Soon, the system worked both ways. Scholars from all over Christendom sought Holste's friendship to gain entrance both to the important research collection Barberini's library was becoming, and, a few years later, to the *Vaticana* itself, of which he became first custodian in 1638. In return, these scholars helped Holste to find what he was looking for.⁷² Also, of course, they spread Barberini's fame, returning home with their stories, publishing the studies based on material in his and the papal collections.⁷³ Even foreign publishers wrote to the Cardinal for the favour to see their imprint on his shelves: it simply was the best propaganda they could wish for.⁷⁴ Thus, the Barberini Library gained an international reputation, serving as one of the Cardinal's main propaganda instruments.

*Instruments of cultural policy: the papal university, the Collegio Romano,
and the problems of Church patronage of scholarship and science*

By the end of the 16th century, the Roman university, commonly called *La Sapienza*, though of ancient renown, had fallen upon bad times.⁷⁵ Despite the fact that in this field, too, Pope Sixtus V in 1585 had introduced some of his famous reforms, student numbers had dropped, and the international standing of the institution was negligible. Many students did not deserve the title at all, having enrolled for the mere rea-

⁷² See: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6488, f. 93^r, for the lists of newly-published titles Holste compiled from his correspondence with Naudé.

⁷³ A by no means exhaustive list of the many books dedicated to Barberini can be found in: L. von Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste* Vol. XIII–2 (Freiburg 1929), 1012–1013.

⁷⁴ E.g. the famous Parisian printer and publisher Cramoisy to Francesco Barberini, May 6, 1644, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 8016, f. 10^r.

⁷⁵ *BAV, Vat. Lat.*, Vol. 7400, ff. 26^r–43^v, “Relazione dello stato dello Studio o Sapienza di Roma, suoi disordini, e rimedii da prendere.” Cfr. P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, ‘La Biblioteca Alessandrina, la Sapienza e la politica universitaria di Alessandro VII (1655–1669)’ in: AA. VV., *Roma e lo Studium Urbis. Spazio urbano e cultura dal Quattrocento al Seicento* (Rome 1991), 498–510.

son of acquiring the legal privileges it conferred. They stayed around for eight or nine years, acting, in the words of more seriously-minded colleagues, as ‘vagabonds and men of bad reputation’, ‘vagabondi e huomini di mala vita’, making life difficult for all those youngsters who wanted to get on with their studies as soon as possible because they had no parental allowance to fall back on.

Critics not only denounced the lack of discipline among students and staff, they also, almost as if in an echo of the writer who had counselled young Cardinal Barberini, pointed out that the salaries of the professors were too low to attract qualified candidates when vacancies occurred. This, in its turn, resulted from insufficient funding and bad management.

The accession of Urban VIII, with his reputation as a patron of the arts and sciences, gave hope to those who desperately desired to remedy this sorry situation. They were not disappointed. With a chirograph of October 3, 1623, and a subsequent decree of November 6, 1623, the Pope reorganised the *Sapienza*, increasing its funds, and introducing some strict rules to govern the behaviour and functioning both of students and professors.⁷⁶ In subsequent years, he also created a number of new chairs. He even proposed to follow the examples set by such universities as Salamanca and the Sorbonne to attract suitable candidates for important positions by bestowing ecclesiastical benefices upon them⁷⁷—as if following the advice given to his nephew in 1623.

Meanwhile, Urban also continued to favour his old school, the *Collegio Romano*, though his allegedly pro-French policy did little to keep him in the Jesuits’ good graces. Yet, the authorities of the *Collegio* knew they had to honour him and his nephews as their main benefactors. Thus, on the feast of St. Ignatius in August, 1640, the *Collegio* was filled with an enormous “apparato”, a temporary architectural construction, this time in the form a colonnade of which the arches were filled with statues and portraits of all those who had supported the university, and of those scholars who, after graduating from it, had contributed printed works to the world of learning. Urban’s statue, adorned with all the

⁷⁶ *ASR*, Fondo Università, Vol. 83, ff. 14^r–37^v, “Relazione dello stato dell’università”, and copies of the chirograph and the decree.

⁷⁷ See: *ASR*, Fondo Cartari-Febei, Vol.65, ff. 26^r, 32^r, et cetera, “Memorie per lo Studio.”

symbols of learning, presided over it in the central niche, accompanied by the likenesses of the three Barberini-nephews, all of them former pupils as well.⁷⁸

Also, a few of the College's pupils—probably the ambitious ones—used the festivities following their formal thesis-defence to openly flatter the Barberini; since for these occasions special music often was composed, it might be set to such words as, e.g. the cantata *Saeculum Barberinum, sive Aetas Aurea*, in 1637, or *Apum triumphus*, in 1638; the message was obvious: this was the golden age of the Barberini bees triumphant.

Church patronage of learning in the 17th century did, of course, pose the problem of the old versus the new sciences. Rome never felt easy in dealing with those scholars whose ideas, however scientifically interesting and even viable, might undermine tradition and, thus, threaten the Church's authority. During the years of Urban's pontificate, the problem came to a head in the famous case of Galileo Galilei.

At first, both the Pope and the Cardinal-*Padrone* were quite interested in Galileo's thinking, even promoting his publications. Indeed, as Galilei made clear in his own writings, he considered Urban his chief patron. For a long time, he had good reason to do so. Already before the new pope's accession, the two had been corresponding on matters of scholarship and poetry,⁷⁹ and Maffeo Barberini even had written a poem to honour his learned friend,⁸⁰ whose works he avidly read. In the 1630's, however, problems arose that could, perhaps, not be avoided in a culture balancing between literal-mindedness and symbolism, and, moreover, in a structure where power struggles were the order of the day. Yet, the issue was not Galilei's defence of the Copernican vision of the universe and the question whether this vision or rather the old image of the cosmos as centred around the earth, Man, should be taken literally. Rather, Galilei's ideas about the atomic structure of matter were thought to touch upon the central theological issue of transubstantiation. Consequently, he had to be admonished in the strongest of terms to leave this matter alone. When he proved unwilling to do so, he was brought to trial before the Inquisition, even though the case against him was built not around this extremely dangerous position, but around

⁷⁸ Gigli, *Diario*, *o.c.*, August 1640.

⁷⁹ *BAV, BL*, Vols. 6479 and 6480.

⁸⁰ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 2054, f. 138^r.

his less controversial ideas about the universe.⁸¹ Even so, both the Pope and, some say, Cardinal Barberini were loth to have him punished too harshly.

As indicated already, Peiresc, one of Galilei's most fervent admirers, tried to intervene, pointing out to Barberini, though in the politest of terms, that the scholar's incarceration—which, of course, it was not—would be bad propaganda; indeed, he warned the Cardinal it would constitute a 'blot on the splendour and fame of this pontificate'.⁸² His efforts were of as little avail, though, as were the pleas of one of Galilei's pupils and life-long friends, Benedetto Castelli, a well-known mathematician and papal courtier and himself related to the Barberini family.⁸³

Like Holstenius's, Castelli's career, too, illustrates the pragmatic power aspect that always underlay the Barberini's cultural policy. Already in 1624, Pope Urban had called his learned kinsman to Rome. He was appointed mathematics teacher to young Taddeo Barberini who, as General of Holy Church, had to know about modern theories concerning strategy, ballistics, et cetera. While Castelli and Holstenius might indulge in the joys of antiquarianism, discussing Holste's discoveries—both in the field and in archives and libraries—of the Roman roads, and Castelli's ideas about the way they used to be paved,⁸⁴ their masters always used their work to more utilitarian effect as well. Holste's knowledge of ancient and modern geography helped to solve the fiscal problems of the Papal States insofar as they related to boundary problems, while Castelli's knowledge of, especially, hydraulics was used to solve problems of water management, especially in connection with the many marshes that made the papal patrimony such a relatively sterile state, that for is food supplies relied on imports.⁸⁵

⁸¹ See: S. Pieralisi, *Urbano VIII e Galileo Galilei. Memorie Storiche* (Rome 1875) as well as: S.M. Pagano (ed.), *I documenti del processo di Galileo Galilei* (Città del Vaticano 1984). Recent interpretations of the affair are: J.P. Longchamp, *L'Affaire Galilei* (Paris 1981); Redondo and R. Pillorget, 'Urbain VIII, le Pape Calomnie', in: *Historama*, 88 (July 1991), 28–32.

⁸² Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, December 5, 1635, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, ff. 109^{r-v}. Cfr. also: Pieralisi, *o.c.*, 301–340. See, also, Chapter VIII of this book.

⁸³ For Castelli, see: G.L. Masetti Zannini, *La Vita di Benedetto Castelli* (Brescia 1961); S. Drake, 'Benedetto Castelli', in: *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 3 (New York 1971), 115–117; A. de Ferrari, 'Benedetto Castelli', in: *DBI*, 21 (Rome 1978), 686–690.

⁸⁴ B. Castelli's mss. text of the *Trattato delle selciate delle strade antiche*, preserved in: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6461, was published in: A. Favaro, *Amici e corrispondenti di Galileo* (Firenze 1908), 103–105.

⁸⁵ B. Castelli, *Dimostrazioni geometriche della misura dell'acque correnti* (Rome 1628).

Hence, Castelli looked upon the head of the Barberini family as his *padrone*. Indeed, through Francesco's influence, in 1626 he was given a chair at the *Sapienza*. He retained this post till his death in 1643—not having been given permission to join his revered master Galilei in his exile at Arcetri.⁸⁶ However, Castelli continued to utilize his teaching position to yet spread the new ideas. Indeed, having overcome some initial distrust, he used the growing craze for things mathematical among the Roman “literati”—especially at the court of Cardinal Francesco—to explain to them the intricacies of Galilei's ideas.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, he, too, had to bow to the higher reasons posed by the Church's interests as perceived by the Pope and his advisers. Whether or not out of disappointment over the turn things had taken, Castelli, in letters to his friends, could not refrain to complain about the heavy toll dependence upon the Barberini's favour had taken.⁸⁸

Of course, one cannot generalize on the basis of one case, only. Nevertheless, one may wonder whether such a feeling was not more widely spread in a world where the professionalization of the arts and sciences—that ultimately was to create at least the semblance, if not, after all, the reality of independence—had not really started, yet: a world where the structure of society and culture forced people to carry the yoke of patronage. The psychological implications of this situation for artistic and intellectual life in the 17th century have yet to be studied.

Instruments of cultural policy: printing and publishing

In his correspondence with the Cardinal-*Padrone*, Peiresc, as Barberini's self-appointed cultural adviser, also showed his shrewdness in the field of public relations, of image building, when he pointed out, as he repeatedly did, that, generally speaking, in the field of patronage the promotion and distribution of scholarship through printing was far more effective than, e.g., the mere collection of costly and rare manuscripts and books.⁸⁹ Barberini, of course, was well aware of the power

⁸⁶ For the contacts between Castelli and Galilei: A. Favaro, ed., *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei* (Firenze 1890–1909), *passim*.

⁸⁷ Favaro, *o.c.*, Vol. XIV, 296, a letter of 1631.

⁸⁸ *DBI*, 21 (Rome 1978), 689.

⁸⁹ E.g. Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, 30 April 1636, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, ff. 177^r–179^v.

of the publishing press, as is witnessed by the many books that were printed at his cost.⁹⁰ Indeed, analysing his expenditure in this respect, one is struck by the way they seem to be part of a ‘program’ that coincided with his patronage in other domains of culture as well. Significantly, many works whose publication he paid for had been written by scholars from his entourage.

Roughly, they cover four fields, viz. the Church’s contacts with the Christian Orient; publications specifically connected with the functioning of the Roman Church; works of learning in general; and encomiastic texts extolling the virtues of the Barberini family. Sometimes, however, the fields overlapped, specifically as the possibility to include a Barberini-element often seems to have influenced the decision to publish a certain work though its main argument might lay in another field.

In connection with the first two categories, Barberini’s most important venture surely was the project to establish a printing press specifically devoted to the dissemination of the works of ancient Latin and, especially, Greek authors.⁹¹ This ‘officina’ would have been directed by Holste, who was very enthusiastic about the idea and immediately explained it to Peiresc, also going into details about the advantages of a new, hydraulic press that would save many hours of costly labour.⁹²

Peiresc hailed the initiative as of the highest importance, stressing that in implementing it Barberini would not only be serving the Republic of Letters but also his own and his papal uncle’s immortal fame. Moreover, it would be one more step towards the restoration of Rome’s ancient position as the capital of learning, which, in this particular field of scholarship, it had been losing to Holland, the German countries and England, with negative results for its religious authority as well. Peiresc enthusiastically concluded that, thus, the ‘Muses which have begun to change home and take up residence elsewhere, going among the barbarians’ might be lured back to their ancient haunt. There, they undoubtedly would increase the cultural standing of Rome and, it is implied, the efficacy of papal religious policy all over Christendom.⁹³ By “barbari”, Peiresc obviously meant the states of Northern Europe,

⁹⁰ An important survey is given in: Fr. Petrucci Nardelli, ‘Il Cardinale Francesco Barberini seniore e la Stampa a Roma’, in: *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, CVIII (1985), 133–163.

⁹¹ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6484, passim.

⁹² H. Boissonade, *Lucas Holstenius, Epistolae ad Diversos* (Paris 1817), 475–476.

⁹³ The “muse, che hanno cominciato di mutar domicilio et incaminarsi fra i barbari”: Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, June 2, 1633, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, ff. 52^r–54^v.

in a *topos* reminiscent of the old Roman days and used ever since, if, perhaps, only in a traditional, empty flattery of Rome, for a man of Peiresc's intelligence and contacts very well knew it to be no longer entirely true.

In the end, the project to set up a Barberini Press failed, but its corollary, the casting of a great quantity of Greek type, was realised, though at quite staggering expense. These characters were not used in Rome, only. In later years, foreign printers were allowed to borrow them as well.⁹⁴ Meanwhile, either through the press of the Propaganda Fide, or through the Vatican Press, Barberini commissioned such publications as the acts of the Council of Florence (1438–1445), that had been of such importance in the history of relations between the Roman and the Orthodox Churches and the catechism in Greek.⁹⁵

In the field of Church organisation, various texts containing the rules of monasteries somehow connected with Barberini's patronage were published, though this production was among the least important.

Many non-Greek books promoted and paid for by Barberini were of obvious propagandistic value in the overlapping fields of learning and religion as well, such as Antonio Bosio's widely-read *Roma Sotterranea*, documenting Rome's Christian antiquities; one of the earliest attempts at an empirical archaeology, it was published in 1632 and proved of great importance for the furtherance of Classical studies as well as of the history of early Christianity. The publication of Athanasius Kircher's 1636-*Prodromus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus* was, of course, a monument to Europe's continuing fascination with the Near East, a fascination that had religious roots but precisely in these years was developing into a field of more general learning as well. The book on the antiquities of the Barberini town of Palestrina, the Praeneste of the Ancients, written by Francesco's first librarian Soares, conceived in the 1630's, was being published in the 1640's, with the help of Holste and Dal Pozzo.⁹⁶ Meanwhile, part of the huge scholarly production of Holste himself, most of which was still in manuscript form at his death, was

⁹⁴ E.g. the case of the Parisian firm of Cramoisy, which used the type to print its edition of Anna Comnena's *Alexiad*: Cramoisy to Francesco Barberini, December 8, 1651, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 8016, f. 39^r.

⁹⁵ For a survey: Ch. Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique ou description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des Grecs au dix-septième siècle* (Paris 1897), V, 124–130, and: Z.N. Tsirplanes, 'I Libri Greci pubblicati dalla Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide (Sec. XVII)', in: *Balkan Studies*, 15 (1974), 205 sqq.

⁹⁶ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 3051, f. 71.

published posthumously on Barberini's instigation and at his cost as the *Collectio Romana...Historiae Ecclesiasticae Monumentorum* (1662).

Such undeniably important works of learning as Niccolò Alemanni's work on the old mosaics of St. John Lateran's,⁹⁷ that had been restored by Barberini, served both a scholarly and a propagandistic reason: they stressed the antiquity of the position of the pope precisely in his function as bishop of Rome.

Of course, Barberini could not fail to pay for the publication of his uncle's poems, both the Latin *Poemata* and the verses in Italian. For example, of both 1631-editions, 500 copies were printed.⁹⁸ In 1640, the poetic ancestor of the Barberini family, Francesco da Barberino was honoured as well when Francesco Ubaldini edited his *Documenti d'Amore*; besides a thorough, philosophical introduction and a life of the poet, it also had beautiful illustrations by Cornelis Bloem(m)aert (1566–1651). Even the publication of Adam Olearius's *Viaggi di Moscovia de gli anni 1633, 1634, 1635 e 1636* could serve a multiple purpose: its interest was scientific, it was important to the Propaganda's efforts among the Russian Christians and, through the addition of the 16th-century travels to Russia of Raffaele Barberini, it connected even this enterprise with the papal family.⁹⁹

The fame of Tuscany, whence the Barberini came and with which they wished to be associated, if only because Tuscan was held to be the purest form of Italian, was served by Ubaldini's edition of *Le Rime di M. Francesco Petrarca*, as well as with Francesco Bracciolini's *Delle Poesie Liriche Toscane*, dedicated to Anna Barberini, Taddeo's wife—women, of course, were not expected to read Latin poems, but might profitably peruse texts in the vernacular.

Other texts even more explicitly served the aim of family aggrandisement. The score of Landi's *Sant'Alessio*, the first Barberini opera, was printed at Barberini's expense, illustrated with precious views of the stage designs. And in 1640 a nice booklet explaining the ideological message of the great fresco of the salon of the new Barberini Palace, too, was published as *La Dichiaratione delle Pitture della Sala de' Signori Barberini*. However, besides a score of blatantly flattering poems that honoured either Pope Urban or his nephew, or even both—many of them

⁹⁷ N. Alemanni, *Dissertatio historica de Lateranensibus parietinis* (Rome 1625).

⁹⁸ *BAV, AB, Computisteria*, Vol. 68, f. 183.

⁹⁹ On him: G. Platania, *Un Italiano alla corte di Ivan il Terribile: Raffaello Barberini* (Udine 1988).

used in this study—, probably the most blatant effort at image building was Count Girolamo Teti's *Aedes Barberina ad Quirinalem...descripta*. It was the work of a man who was a courtier in the Barberini household, something of a professional flatterer, who unfailingly commented poetically on the important events in the lives of the various members of the Barberini family.¹⁰⁰ Published in 1642 and richly illustrated by, again, Bloem(m)aert, Teti's text glorified the Barberini Palace, its vast collections and huge library, and the company of cultured men gathering around its main occupant and real owner, Cardinal Francesco. A new Parnassus had been created, where the Barberini sat enthroned as "altri Apollines". Though Teti was not the first to liken either Maffeo or Francesco Barberini to Apollo, whose rays illuminated both the "Urbs" and the "Orbs",¹⁰¹ Cardinal Francesco, of course, was duly satisfied to see this work in print as well.¹⁰²

However, many volumes written and published under the *aegis* of the Cardinal-*Padrone* or, for that matter, of Pope Urban himself,¹⁰³ show a genuine interest in the furtherance of general learning, even if, sometimes, a utilitarian note creeps in, as in the publication of Father G.B. Ferrario's famous *Flora*.¹⁰⁴ The *De Florum Cultura Libri IV*, published in 1633, followed up by an Italian edition in 1638, was an important contribution to botany, with its beautiful illustrations on the basis of paintings by Guido Reni and Andrea Sacchi, engraved by Johannes Greuter and Claude Mellan paid for by Barberini.¹⁰⁵ Texts as these, of course, served other, more specifically educational purposes as well. Both Pope Urban and his nephew were well aware of the prime importance of good education, not only for the internal needs of the Papal States but certainly also for its international cultural prestige.

A veritable printed monument and, at the same time, a remarkable piece of papal propaganda, was realised by Francesco Barberini in 1638, a year after the death of his old friend Nicholas de Peiresc. After Peiresc's demise, the learned community of Europe realised that

¹⁰⁰ E.g. the poems in: *BAV, BL*, Vols. 4364, 6543.

¹⁰¹ For another simile in this vein, see: *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6521, a poem by one Reviglias.

¹⁰² Cfr. *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6478, ff.73^r–83^v, letters between Barberini and Teti.

¹⁰³ A list of books dedicated to Pope Urban is appended to: L. von Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste Pastor*, Vol. XIII (Freiburg 1928–1929), 1009–1012.

¹⁰⁴ On the *Flora*, see: Peiresc to Francesco Barberini, October 5, and November 17, 1633, and August 2, 1635, *BAV, BL*, Vol. 6503, ff. 66^{r-v}, 67^r, 72^r, 142^r.

¹⁰⁵ Cfr. D. Coffin, *Gardens and Gardening in Papal Rome* (Princeton 1991), 166–161, 175–178.

an important man had disappeared from the scene of the Republic of Letters. Both to honour his memory and, of course, to profitably link their own name to his fame, people began thinking of using his greatest legacy, the letters in which he had corresponded with so many contemporaries, to this very end. Thus, his friend Gabriel Naudé, residing in Rome, wrote to the Dupuy Brothers: “On parle ici d’imprimer ses lettres Italiennes, ce qui serait facile à faire au Cardinal Barberin et donnerait envie à nos libraires de faire le même de ses Françaises. O, le beau et bon livre que ce serait.”¹⁰⁶ When, four years after Peiresc’s death, Pierre Gassendi published his biography, he, too, indicated the importance of the letters: ‘there are many of his Letters, which, being replenished with learning, may be accounted so many Books, and do every way deserve to be published in Print.’¹⁰⁷

Alas, nothing came of these plans, but meanwhile Cardinal Barberini had not hesitated to employ the impressive cultural machinery which he dominated to both publicly express his sincere sorrow over his long-time friend’s death and, at the same time, turn the event to good propagandistic use for the greater glory of Rome, the Barberini and, ultimately, of the Church. First, he enabled Naudé to publish a long letter to Pierre Gassendi in which Rome’s sorrow over the death of this great man was made known to the world. Then, he helped print Jean-Jacques Bouchard’s funerary address, held during a formal session of the Roman Academy of the “Umoristi” on December, 21, 1637.¹⁰⁸ However, the Cardinal also decided upon a different scheme, which, through various stages, evolved over the months after Peiresc’s death till in 1638 the Vatican Typography published the *Monumentum Romanum Nicolao...Peirescio...Doctrinae Virtutisque Causa Factum*, at Barberini’s own expense.¹⁰⁹

The manuscript dossier upon which, apparently, the printed text was based, does not allow for a complete reconstruction of its genesis, but some illuminating details emerge.¹¹⁰ Only a few months after Peiresc’s

¹⁰⁶ *Lettres de Gariel Naudé à Jacques Dupuy* (Edmonton 1982), 77.

¹⁰⁷ P. Gassendi’s Latin biography: *Viri illustris (...) Nicolai Fabricii de Peiresc (...) Vita* (Paris 1641), was translated into English and published in: W. Rand, *The Mirror of True Nobility and Gentility, being the life of Nicolaus Claudius Fabricius, lord of Peiresc* (London 1657). For this quote: Part II, 215.

¹⁰⁸ J.-J. Bouchard, *Peireskii laudatio habita in concione funebri Academicorum Romanorum, die decembris 31 anno 1637* (Rome 1638). The address also was published as an appendix to the *Monumentum*.

¹⁰⁹ *BAV, AB, Computisteria*, Vol. 81, f. 86^v.

¹¹⁰ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 1996.

death, Cardinal Barberini must have asked Camillo Colonna, the president of the *Accademia degli Umoristi*, to which both he and Peiresc belonged, to think of a way to honour their former colleague. It was decided that a number of members would write a poem to express their feelings on the death of their foreign friend. In the first months of 1638, these poems started pouring in. Among the contributors we find almost all the erudite inmates of Barberini's household and, indeed, of the intellectual community of papal Rome at large. The six censors of the Academy judged each and every poem. They found some of them excellent, others, however, defective and in need of revision, preferably by Barberini.¹¹¹ Alas, though short notes inserted in the manuscript, containing suggestions for emendations and improvements, show the slow genesis of the texts, it is not possible to follow the process for each poem in detail.

The most surprising aspect of the final product, the *Monumentum*, is its quite obvious construction as a political statement, and a twofold political statement at that. On the obverse of the title page, the book opens with the most expressive of the many Barberini-emblems using the bee-motive, the one in which three bees plough the field, expressing the three different activities of the three papal nephews, the Barberini-brothers: statecraft, warfare and scholarship.

Then follows a foreword in which Bouchard addresses Cardinal Barberini, expressing his gratitude for being allowed this opportunity to give vent to his grief, since Francesco is the intellectual author of this enterprise. He continues to praise Rome as his second fatherland that is giving him the chance to peruse his studies in quiet. Now that all Europe is in turmoil, what with the barbarians invading it and the pest raging through it, Rome more than ever shows it is indeed the capital of an empire, the seat of culture, of scholarship. This is made possible by the wisdom of the Cardinal and his papal uncle, resplendent amidst all this misery.

On the following page, the book is presented as the product of the Academy of the Humourists, with Barberini as the author, and Bouchard as the editor. Next comes a letter by Bouchard to a high-placed Frenchman in which he describes the commemorative session of the Academy in January 1638. In the Academy's long history, only six men had ever been accorded this honour, but never before a foreigner,

¹¹¹ *Monumentum*, 33–34.

and a non-poet at that. However, it had been Barberini's specific wish that Peiresc be remembered as a Roman. Hence, the Academy had convened around Peiresc's portrait, which had been put in the seat of honour. In the grand hall, which had overflowed with cardinals and other dignitaries, various funerary odes had been recited, which now form part of the publication. Following the imprimatur—given in glowing words by no less a person than Lucas Holstenius—these texts are presented first, preceding a portrait of Peiresc, engraved by Claude Mellan.

The *Laudatio* written by Bouchard, partly on the basis of material that, among others, Gassendi had provided, is quite illuminating. It presents Peiresc as a scholar who surpassed all other scholars, even the Roman ones. Still, his life, actually, is sketched solely in function of his relationship with the Barberini, first with Maffeo, now Pope Urban, and then with Francesco. Peiresc's contribution to the culture of Italy, of the Rome of the Barberini was hailed as enormous, what with the plants and animals he donated to Roman collections, the books and manuscripts with which he enriched Roman libraries, especially in the field of oriental studies, and the friendships which he cultivated, with such men as the Lebanese Amira and the Italians Campanella and Galilei. Indeed, his correspondence with these men must be considered of the greatest importance—perhaps Bouchard hoped that the plan to publish the letters might yet be realized, if only because, of course, his name would then be linked to Peiresc's fame.

The body proper of the book consists of a series of “Componimenti Funerali” and “Carmina Funebria”. An elegy by the poet Bartolomeo Tortoletti—a friend of Pope Urban's—and Naudé's letter to Gassendi serve as an interlude, which is then followed by some more “Carmina Funebria”.¹¹² Approximately half of the poems must be considered shallow versification of the kind produced by people who either did not know the deceased or did not care to put in an effort—or simply lacked the talent to write a decent poem. Thus, even Lucas Holstenius, honouring Peiresc as his patron, only produced a very carefully worded, entirely impersonal set of verses—they would have fooled a reader in believing the two had not been such good friends as they actually had been. The other half consists of poems that show a more personal inter-

¹¹² *Monumentum*, 1–55; 56–68; 68–70; 71–75; 76–82.

pretation of the event, mostly in trying to highlight Peiresc's scholarly merits. Yet, it is precisely in these poems that the political message of the *Monumentum* is elaborated.

One Domenico Benigni tells his readers how Peiresc, roaming the shores of 'the sea'—i.e. the Mediterranean—, was forever trying to discover the curiosities of nature, and of antiquity. Francesco Xaverio Riccoboni recounts the laments that can be heard in Arabia—the Near East significantly mentioned first—, the Indies and in Africa: Peiresc, the host of wisdom, is dead. Gregorio Porzio thinks that one who has served wisdom does not need a marble pyramid as a monument: he will be honoured in poems. Giovanni Lotti finds the most speaking monument, and an immortal one at that, in the museum built by Peiresc himself, spending his patrimony on the discovery and restoration of antiquities, in pursuit of African monsters and Indian rarities, in searching for the secrets of earth and heaven

Fabio della Cornia, one of the Barberini intimi, sets the more obvious propagandistic tone with a poem lamenting the fact that, in the midst of war, France has to announce to its mother, Queen Rome, the death of its greatest son. The famous papal banker, Tiberio Ceuli, links the French maecenas with Urban and the Barberini family, through whom he contributed to the growth of virtue in Rome. Francesco Bracciolini, a poet-client of the Barberini's already when Urban had only been Cardinal Maffeo, declares that Francesco Barberini's initiative will serve to exalt Peiresc's fame beyond the grave. Indeed, the virtue of this 'pilgrim to Rome' will be spread by the bee. Even though he is dead in France, in Rome, the Eternal City, his fame will never die—"nel chiaro terreno ove finisce Virtude affatto mai nessun perisce." Calano della Ciaia, too, writes that Peiresc has contributed to Rome's eternity. The erudite deacon from Liège, Henry Dormueil, who called Peiresc his patron,¹¹³ contributed various poems, in one of which he writes that he carries Peiresc's monument in his heart. Elsewhere, he praises Peiresc for bequeathing the precious Samaritan Bible to Barberini; indeed, in this poem the various Roman libraries allegorically laud the Frenchman for having contributed such knowledge to their repositories through the manuscripts he discovered and donated, or asked others to donate. Thus, the *Monumentum* presents itself as an effort to establish and confirm Rome's position as the cultural leader of Europe, as, indeed, its

¹¹³ *BAV, BL*, Vol. 1996, f. 79^r, Dormueil to Barberini.

queen: even the learned Frenchman, Peiresc, only fully realized his 'virtù' through his contributions to Rome's greater glory. The message was clear: essentially, every European was (a) Roman, because Europe's culture was the culture that had originated in Rome and continued to be nurtured by it.

Yet, this was not the only way the *Monumentum* served a propagandistic purpose. For while the funerary poems were in the making, someone must have come up with the idea to add another section to the book. Perhaps Barberini and Bouchard, working together, thought of it. In the end, they realised the "Panglossia, sive generis humani lessus in funere delicii sui Nicolai Claudii Fabricii Peirescii", an extraordinary collection of short poems—some, really, no more than aphorisms or, to judge by their quality, doggerels—in almost every language known to Europe by the beginning of the 17th century; actually, some 40 tongues are represented, covering as many pages.

The languages of the Near East come first, as befitting the memory of a man who forever had been trying to find which of them was the oldest, the mother of all. Abraham Ecchellen writes in Arabic, Chaldean and Syriac, Giovanni Battista Iona in Hebrew, Athanasius Kircher in Coptic, Georgian and Samaritan, Pietro della Valle in Persian. But there are poems in Armenian, Ethiopian and Turkish, too.

All European languages are represented, including Catalan and Cantabrian, Breton and Provençal, as well as Hungarian, Illyrian, Polish, Russian, Ruthenic and Slavic, mostly in their original script, and Gaelic, in Latin letters, because the Vatican Printing Office did not possess any Irish characters. Holstenius contributed a text in Saxon. The anonymous Dutch poem could well be by Joost van den Vondel or by Daniel Heinsius. The English piece, referring to Peiresc's books, aptly versifies along such lines as "whose more than wonder-breathing library / made all antiquity seem novelty."

This remarkable series ends on a truly exotic note, with poems in what is called 'Indian-Brahmin', as well as in Japanese and Quechua—all three in Latin script as well.

The message of this last section of the *Monumentum* is obvious, too. Rome not only is the queen of Europe, its cultural centre, it also rules the world. It has the capacity to muster up people who speak all the world's languages, thus, in a way, undoing the division of the languages, God's severest punishment of Mankind after its fall from original grace. Only under the guidance of Rome, of the Universal Church, will the world be made whole again.

Cultural policy and the printed word: the advance of 'literal mindedness'

Studying the variety of cultural manifestations in Rome during the Barberini period, one is struck by the fact that, in the end, most of the manifold non-verbal strategies that were employed, whether musical, pictorial, architectural or theatrical, apparently were not deemed effective without the added force of the written word, or, more accurately, without a comment in written and increasingly often also in printed, published words.

If a painting was painted that was considered of some public importance, of some political significance in the widest sense—which implied, of course, the religious dimension—a printed explanation of its program was often provided, as in the case of the frescoes of the Barberini “salone”. When a procession was staged, the organizers made certain that a written description was available for those who stood by to explain what happened to the illiterate public; at really important occasions such as the festivities surrounding the ceremony of Urban’s “possesso” of Rome, a published text was provided. If an opera was performed, booklets giving not only the text but also explaining the deeper sense of the drama were printed, as is shown by the performance of the *Sant’Alessio*. If an execution was ordered, the program of its ceremonial context often was minutely outlined. Indeed, even if a poem was written, it was deemed necessary to provide a comment that, more often than not, far exceeded the original in verbosity if not complexity, though, of course, it was meant to explain and facilitate the message rather than complicate it. However, in the case of the Pope’s poems one might argue the situation enabled Urban to manipulate the interpretation of his texts so as to make them suit different occasions.

Thus, literally, most manifestations of culture in the end became texts. On one level this only may have reflected a need to keep record of what otherwise might be lost and, indeed, often did disappear. However, what with the ephemeral nature of much music, public ritual and, even, art, I doubt whether this is the only or even most likely explanation. To me, the phenomenon seems to point to an increasing awareness of, and, consequently, an increasing use of the written word as a signifier, a medium that can force the reader, even if he is a spectator or a listener, to internalize one of the many possible meanings only: the one put into words. The example of Urban’s poems and the comments written on them shows that the relative open nature of the

original text was completely closed by the commentators, who provided their public with a forced reading that left but one message. Thus, in Rome, too, the 17th century shows itself as the period in which a slow but irreversible transition to a culture of literal-mindedness takes place. While not exactly excluding the other forms of representation, the written word came to occupy a cultural position of increasing pre-eminence that was to have far-reaching consequences for European man's concept of himself and his world.

Ultimately, this presents those who want to comprehend the past rather than turning it into a text that only comments upon our own questions with a number of interconnected problems. If a given text was conceived as a program guiding the understanding of another cultural manifestation both as to its form and its content, intending to steer contemporaries towards a certain interpretation, to the exclusion even of other possible 'readings', we will never be certain the public did, indeed, react as desired. If a text was written during or after the production of another artefact, it may either represent the intention of the person who conceived it or who commissioned it, or of both—excluding the possibility, which, for this period, I feel not likely, of an intended multiplicity of meanings on the part of either. Often, of course, it was the interpretation of an accidental 'reader', only.

Yet the very survival of such texts creates dangers for historical interpretation. Frequently, cultural historians tend to take the written representation as the 'real' explanation of the intended message of the other medium involved. Sometimes they are forced to do so, whenever the original product has disappeared, as is so often the case not only with all the manifestations of ephemeral culture, in such diverse phenomena as ceremonial entries, funerals and operas, but also with works of literature and those visual arts that were meant to endure. But even where this is not the case, the temptation seems great, and, consequently, should be resisted. For whenever an interpretation of man's behaviour, action or thought in connection with the variety of cultural manifestations we study cannot be unequivocally linked to such meaningful texts, we should continue to assume that other understandings were and, indeed, are possible as well.

The Transposing Lyre: a cultural policy and its results

In a way, one might see that strange instrument, Giambattista Doni's *Lyra Barberina* as a symbol of the cultural policy pursued at the various Barberini courts. Doni was fascinated by the Greek tonal system he sought to understand through a study of manuscripts found in Roman collections or given to him by or through the help of his many correspondents. He mainly concentrated his studies on Ptolemy and his *tonoi*, or keys. However, to bring the ancient *tonoi* to life again, he had to face two difficulties, the one notational and the other instrumental. He devised a notation to be played on a transposing instrument, using seven *tonoi* to transpose the octave species to various modes as, e.g., the Dorian and the Phrygian; he then created musical instruments allowing this music to be played in all keys. The 'pan-harmonic lyre', named the *Lyra Barberina* in honour of his patrons, was one among a series of such instruments.¹¹⁴ Obviously, Doni wanted to know not only what it sounded like, but also to use it for his chief aim, to create a music more expressive than the one composed by his contemporaries. Actually, several of his friends obliged by creating pieces made specifically for his instruments: composers all connected with the court of the Pope or his nephews like Girolamo Frescobaldi, Domenico Mazzocchi and Pedro de Heredia. The famous traveller and Orientalist Pietro della Valle, who had been appointed papal chamberlain—a sinecure enabling him to pursue his scholarly studies—obliged as well: in 1640, he wrote a sacred oratorio for five voices in five *tonoi* and modes.¹¹⁵

It is tempting to argue that, in the wider context of Roman Baroque culture, the transposition Doni tried to effectuate with the help of his lyre was realized as well. Literally, his efforts in the field of musical theory and practice helped to integrate a vast amount of Classical scholarship in Rome's contemporary culture, thus preserving it as a creative element. Figuratively speaking, one might see the Barberini Lyre as a material representation of a cultural policy pursued by a family that, at least in its two main representatives, tried to find forms to allow for the

¹¹⁴ F. Vatielli, *La "Lyra Barberina" di Giovanni Battista Doni* (Pesaro 1909). A simple reprint of the *Lyra Barberina* has been published in Bologna in 1974. One should now use: C.V. Palisca, *G.B. Doni's History of the Ancient Lyre, Lyra Barberini. Commentaries and Iconological Study. A Facsimile Edition with Critical Notes* (Bologna 1981).

¹¹⁵ A. Ziino, 'Pietro della Valle e la "Musica erudita"', in: *Analecta Musicologica*, 4 (1967), 97–111.

transposition of complex ideas, partly old, partly new, in such a way or ways as to most effectively convey their central message.

It was the message of Religion's power, of the Church's power, of the power of the papacy. In a society wherein power and authority were highly personalised, it could not but also be the power of the pope *pro tempore*, and of his family. Wealth was seen both as the expression and the guarantee of power, and thus used to influence the public. The universal languages of gesture and music were spoken to evoke a response that allowed the manipulation of men. Classical mythology and arcane allegory were employed to form images that would create emotions, impress the senses and influence behaviour. And words were used to ensure that whatever the medium chosen, its message was understood as those in power wanted it to be understood.

When Giacinto Gigli, the chronicler of papal Rome in the first decades of the 17th century, looked back upon Urban's pontificate in the year of his death, 1644, he felt that the reign of Maffeo Barberini had known two distinct periods, one of vigour, and one of decline, with the dividing line running somewhere in the early 1630's. Against this background of a contemporary's sensibility it is perhaps admissible to ask a question which otherwise might sound anachronistic, viz. whether Barberini cultural policy, at least as exemplified in the products of the patronage of the Pope and of his ruling nephew, was more modern in its first phase, and more conservative in its second period.

On the whole, one might term the ideas of the Barberini traditionalist. Obviously, this does not mean they were always conservative, or even reactionary, nor indeed does it preclude innovation. Their traditionalism was of the creative kind. Springing as it did from a need to hold on to power, to create stability during a very long period in which they ruled a rapidly changing society, it yet resulted in many new ideas. The Pope's poems, while hailing back to Ciceronian forms, nevertheless were used to express new or at least more stringently formulated ideas about such seemingly diverse topics as moral restoration and the necessity to strengthen the powers of the papacy—topics of course that, in Urban's mind, were not diverse at all.

Moreover, one should never forget that the papacy was a basically personal, and, through the lack of dynastic continuity, essentially unstable regime. Everybody knew the reigning pope would eventually die. Those who controlled institutional religious power, especially the major religious Orders, might well feel they could not but submit to the will of

a youthful, energetic pontiff. If, however, they disliked his policy, there always was the consolation that collectively they would outlast him who for the moment commanded them. This, I think, did happen during Urban's pontificate. As the Pope grew older, such members of the Curia as opposed his ideas grew more daring and powerful, blocking decisions that otherwise might have been taken, giving new directions to policies that otherwise would not have been pursued. If one wonders why the Barberini, especially the Pope himself and his cardinal-nephew, started their reign courting Galilei and then allowed him to be sacrificed to and by, amongst others, the Jesuits, this, too, can be explained from a desire to foster culture, even in the form of innovative, daring ideas as long as it served their ends and, perhaps, their personal inclinations, while yet they had to go with the tide when such a policy seemed no longer opportune and feasible. Thus, the innocent, by and large poetic neo-Platonism of many of Urban's contemporaries, as expressed, for example, in Holste's academic addresses, fell victim of the Curia's, or rather the Jesuits' abhorrence of the more materialistic aspects of the cosmology of Campanella and Galilei. The obvious interest in authors of the neo-Platonist school freely expressed, for example, in the correspondence between Dormeuil and Holste till the mid-1630s, is conspicuously absent in the following decade. Playing with Platonism—and even with neo-Pythagoreanism—, as men like Campanella, Dormeuil and Holste tried to do, was acceptable till a more literal-minded, Aristotelian view began, once more, to prevail. Thus, change and continuity were of necessity intertwined.

Perhaps this was most visible in the city of Rome itself. From the late 15th century onwards, the popes, starting with Nicholas V, had been possessed with the idea of creating a new, ideal city, built on and of the remains of the oldest Rome, which thus lived on forever. Rome was constantly remade, rising from its ruins like a phoenix from its ashes. Not only were the old materials used to construct new buildings, their visible use was symbolic, too, as was the continuous rewording of the ideas the city had of itself, generated in the past. Parallel to this wish developed the desire to create an ideal church to symbolize it.

If, for example, one wonders why so little archaeological research was actually done and completed in Rome during the Barberini-era, as compared to the boom of the Farnese-years in the mid-sixteenth century, one might argue that the growing weight of Counter-Reformation ideas dictated a certain restraint regarding an over-enthusiastic revival of 'pagan' Antiquity: the old notion of remaking Rome, and of creating

images worthy of it still was an obvious determinant of papal cultural policy, but it was now influenced by the need to do so within definite moral-religious parameters.

From the early 16th century onwards, a new St. Peter's had been built, culminating in Urban's plans for its completion, his wish to impress it with the power of the 'conversation' between the 'Seat of Peter' in the apse, the baldachin over St Peter's grave and the Pope's own funerary monument—the monument of the man who had embodied the succession of St Peter's. This church, of course, was meant to improve on the earlier, Constantine foundation which, albeit in a different architectural language, had represented the same ideal of a fusion of the Church's needs with the ancient, pristine Roman style—which in the Christian concept of Rome as the 'eternal city', founded by Noah's descendants, was now represented as, actually, a Christian style.

All these instruments of cultural policy, and the variety of means they employed, created visible and ideological links through time, weaving a web of eternity, where culture was not obtained from an opposition between ancient and modern but from the constant creative reworking of tradition. Nothing should be seen as an object in itself, everything moved in interaction. Or, as Pope Urban himself wrote in his 59th sonnet, where he describes a pilgrim who arrests his hasty pace to admire a fountain: the crystal water, immobile in its essence, never stops transforming to create new visions from the same material.¹¹⁶

Indeed, Urban's poetic efforts and the language in which they were couched testify to this vision as well. Increasingly, they became the efforts of a man trying to proclaim the message of the continuity and thus eternity of Faith's power that was the power of the papacy, of the Church. Therefore, it had to be both a moral message and, perhaps, a message that reconciled the opposites of the Aristotelian and Platonic poetics and worldviews. It used old images to reaffirm even older truths, but always to make them new, operative again.

Whether the Barberini really had hoped, as some contemporaries suggested when Urban died, to have another member of their family elected to the papacy which, one might say, would have been some proof of the effects of their power policy, is not clear. As a family,

¹¹⁶ Maffeo Barberini, *Poemata*, 297.

they temporarily fell from power, but soon returned to stay: Cardinal Francesco, at least, remained a force to be reckoned with till the end of his life.

Whether Urban's policy served the continuity of the papacy's power is a matter of judgement. It seems unlikely any policy could have guaranteed the continuous supremacy of this specific institution at the same time as its very fundament, Christianity, was slowly, but inevitably, being undermined by more secular views, especially amongst the elite, amongst those who held power. Increasingly the forces at work in Europe were outside Rome's reach. Economic, political and intellectual developments in the world at large simply could not be controlled any more by the Church's representatives, whether they were the minor clergy, the hierarchy or, even, the papacy.

Yet, some of the cultural policies instituted or brought to full fruition by the Barberini survived. Obviously, their blazon was not unblemished. Yet, undeniably Rome, through the concerted efforts of the various Barberini men and their cultural entourage, for nearly twenty years once more became a centre of European culture not only in the field of the visual arts but also in the fields of scholarship and learning, regaining a reputation it had gradually lost during the late 16th century.

In 1633, Leone Allacci (1586–1669), the famous medical doctor, philosopher, theologian and Orientalist scholar and, if only therefore, one of Barberini's obvious *famigliari*¹¹⁷—he became the Cardinal's librarian in 1638, when Holste was appointed first custodian of the *Vaticana*—published his *Apes Urbanae sive Viri Illustres qui ab anno 1630 per totum 1632 Romae adfuerunt, ac typis aliquid evulgarunt*. This work, really a bibliography, proves that the amount of books of a scholarly, scientific or generally cultural nature printed in Rome in these few years was astounding indeed. In his introduction, Allacci stresses the role of Rome as a haven of culture. In these years when pestilence, political unrest and war created chaos all over Europe, in Rome a munificent monarch created an infrastructure of academies and libraries to further not only the *artes liberales* but also mathematics, medicine and other new sciences.¹¹⁸ The message was clear: to Rome, the Muses now had returned, flying home on the wings of the Barberini bees. An image had been created that, in many of its material manifestations, survives to the present day. Indeed, one may well conclude that precisely through the various forms

¹¹⁷ For Allacci, see: *DBI*, 2 (Rome 1960), 467–471.

¹¹⁸ See: *BAV, VL*, Vol.7075, the manuscript text of Allacci's *Apes*, f. 7^r, sqq.

given to papal power policy in the Barberini era, the Roman 'scene' continued to fulfil its propagandistic purpose as the 'grand theatre of the world'. At least one of Urban's successors, Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667), consciously tried to emulate his example, using much the same instruments and means as outlined above.

And so did others. At the various Catholic courts of Europe, more precisely those of His Catholic Majesty in Madrid, of His Christian Majesty in Paris, and of His Apostolic Majesty in Vienna, people unhesitatingly followed the examples set by the popes and their nephews, employing the same methods and strategies as the European princes had done ever since, in the Middle Ages, the popes had first become their cultural prototypes. In the years of Urban's pontificate, King Philip IV became the "rey planeta" in the 1630's, as shown by the decorations of the Buen Retiro-palace, while his brother-in-law, Louis XIII, became the first Sun King, posing as Apollo, the god of the Sun and the muses on Rubens's majestic paintings of the coronation of Maria de'Medici and of the Council of the Gods in the Palais du Luxembourg—a program for which, incidentally, Francesco Barberini's self-appointed cultural counsellor Peiresc, an old friend of Rubens's, had contributed various ideas. And, of course, some decades later, that other Louis became the Sun King par excellence, in the "Salon d'Apollon" at Versailles. Indeed, each and all of them loved to sit enthroned upon the clouds of Heaven, as Pope Urban had first sat, on the ceiling fresco of his family's palace.

Nor should we forget the kings of Denmark, England, Portugal and Sweden, or, for that matter, the host of lesser German princes, including, of course, the ecclesiastical rulers of temporal principalities, who in many things were wont to ape their prime example, the pope. Yet of all of them, only the French monarchs succeeded in effectuating a veritable *translatio imperii*, wherein France, instead of Rome, became Europe's cultural capital, its normative centre. However, they only were successful in doing so by emulating and creatively reshaping the examples that had been set by Rome from the beginning of the 16th century onwards and had triumphantly culminated in the Barberini pontificate.

CONCLUSION

“L’ETÀ FORTUNATA DEL MELE”, OR, ‘HONEY’S HAPPY AGE’: THE BARBERINI PONTIFICATE AS A GENERATION, A CROSSROADS—PROBLEMS OF PERSPECTIVE

Obviously, my choice of the pontificate of Pope Urban VIII as the central period and theme of this book has been dictated by the many possibilities an analysis of Barberini cultural policies posed. In the end, I also realized its very length can help us understand its extraordinary influence. Studying these policies as they developed over a period of more than twenty years, I could not but see that ideological choices, the politics of religion and the connected cultural strategies sometimes were adhered to and elaborated over a considerable period of time, while, in other cases, significant shifts occurred. Actually, Urban’s papal reign came to span an entire generation and, perhaps, should be studied as such, following an idea once proposed by Karl Mannheim. To contemporaries and, especially, to the power people of the generation itself, the idea that their own time not only was different from previous periods but, also, had been indelibly stamped with the ideas they had developed themselves was, of course, all-important. Thus, the Barberini were easily flattered by the image of their day and age as “l’Età fortunata del Mele”, as ‘Honey’s happy Age’. However, posterity not only sees the ‘originality’, or the discontinuity of a period, but also the manifestations of continuity. Yet, their very existence, side by side, can often be difficult to interpret, not to say baffling.

Adopting Mannheim’s view, taking, as one’s chosen period, one generation, it can be seen as a crossroads, where traffic concurs consisting of different users, moving at different speed, all trying to avoid clashes and to blend as harmoniously as possible. In looking at time that way its sometimes confusing aspects become less blurred. In a given generation, people of different backgrounds and with different ideas confront issues old and new, and try to solve them as best they can. This, of course, results in actions that to us, who with historical hindsight divide between old and new, traditional and modern, seem curiously mixed,

though evidently they definitely were not always labelled that way at the time being.

Against this background, another characteristic of Baroque culture has to be mentioned. Though the phenomenon of literal-mindedness was of growing importance in Western Europe, it was not yet an overwhelming force in the period; on the contrary, in the Baroque, the essence and meaning of life were experienced through strongly visual impressions and stimuli as well as through words, and, moreover, in a mixture words and images that shows the symbolic world view was not moribund, yet. The opposition between *ratio* and *revelatio* that was to grow into a problematic dichotomy during the following centuries could yet be synthesized precisely through the fusion of the world of words and the world of images.

Of course, we have to realize the 17th century far more than our own times thought about legitimacy in terms of continuity, instead of change, in terms of the sanctity of tradition rather than the sanctity of progress, of 'modernity'. Consequently, the verbal and visual texts that told the 17th century about its past—as always an invented past—were powerful means to structure the present and the future. A deliberate selection of *topoi*, of iconography enabled men in power to adapt, to actualize the past, to manipulate it as a force shaping choices to be made in the present.

In Rome, the omnipresent institutions of religion, in their numerous manifestations, from local parish churches to the great monasteries, all had their own stories about their past, and about the way it legitimized their role in the present. To me, the institution that capped the political, social, and cultural pyramid, the papacy, was the story-teller par excellence, with each successive pope trying to create an image of his own power as sanctioned through these links with the past, both personalised and generalised, using one or more of his predecessors as an example or a touchstone.

Precisely because of the need to reconcile the forces of tradition, of continuity, with the equally forceful desire, or the outright political necessity for innovation, for change, most cultural phenomena studied in the various chapters of this book are not confined to the Barberini pontificate, only. Some of the causes the Barberini espoused or in which they intervened reflected and continued developments of long standing, others, initiated by them, outlasted their heyday—if only because Francesco Barberini, Urban's most influential nephew, outlived him by some 40 years. In their turn they influenced the culture of

following pontificates. Yet, in studying these developments during the generation that encompassed Urban and his nephew, during, that is, ‘Honey’s happy Age’, I hope to have shown both the continuity and the change that occurred on this crossroads of cultural life in 17th-century papal, Baroque Rome.

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